Hafa Adai!

Pacific defense chiefs meet against backdrop of rising China. PAGE 3
Senatorial bet summoned to court over 10-year-old judgment. PAGE 4

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Mafnas drops case vs Finance

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
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REPORTER

Former Division of Customs and Biosecurity director Jose Mafnas has moved to voluntarily dismiss his lawsuit against the Department of Finance and its head, David Atalig, over his abrupt reassignment.

Mafnas

Mafnas, through counsel Charity Hodson, filed a motion yesterday asking the Superior Court to dismiss his case without prejudice. Dismissal without prejudice means the case is dismissed temporarily and can be re-filed again. It was not immediately learned if Mafnas intends to re-file an amended case.

"Pursuant to Rule 41(a)(1)(A)(i)1 of the NMI Rules of Civil Procedure, plaintiff Jose C. Mafnas, by and through undersigned counsel, hereby gives notice of his voluntary dismissal of this case without prejudice," Hodson said.

Hodson said her client moves to dismiss the complaint as none of the defendants have answered the verified complaint or moved for summary judgment.

Mafnas moved for a voluntary dismissal following the court's recent order to stay any

See MAFNAS on Page 4

Donation replaces some items stolen from Man'amko Center

Sen. Edith E. DeLeon Guerrero, and Reps. Corina L. Magofna, Denita Yangetmai, and Vicente Camacho pose for a group photo with Office on Aging director Walter Manglona and members of the Man'amko Center in Garapan yesterday. The four lawmakers donated items to replace some of the items that WERE stolen from the center during a burglary last June 21. The crime remains unsolved.
CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Four lawmakers donated some items yesterday to the Man'amko Center, or Office on Aging in Garapan, to replace some of the items that were stolen from the center during a burglary last June 21.

Office on Aging director Walter Manglona and the senior citizens received the donations from Sen. Edith E. DeLeon Guerrero (D-Saipan) and Reps. Corina L. Magofna (Ind-Saipan), Denita

See DONATION on Page 4

Quake kills 4, hurts dozens in northern PH

A damaged building leans to one side after a strong earthquake hit Bangued, Abra province, northern Philippines on Wednesday July 27, 2022. AP

By JIM GOMEZ
ASSOCIATED PRESS

MANILA, Philippines (AP)—A strong earthquake set off landslides and damaged buildings in the northern Philippines in Wednesday, killing at least four people and injuring dozens. In the capital, hospital patients were evacuated and terrified people rushed outdoors.

The 7-magnitude quake

See QUAKE on Page 4

COMMUNITY VULNERABILITY

LEGEND:
- **Red:** Least safe
- **Orange**
- **Yellow**
- **Blue**
- **Green:** Safest

Source: Office of the Governor

INSIDE

BUSINESS
Buzz Aldrin's jacket worn on his first mission to the moon has been auctioned for $2.7 million.

PAGE 11

NATION
The Pentagon is developing plans for any contingency if House Speaker Nancy Pelosi flies to Taiwan.

PAGE 12

WORLD
Russia targets Ukraine's southern Black Sea regions of Odesa and Mykolaiv with airstrikes.

PAGE 13

SCAN ME WITH A COMPATIBLE QR READER TO KEEP UPDATED ON ALL THE LATEST NEWS.

Local

Man gets 6-year sentence for drug trafficking

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
kimberly_esmores@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Superior Court has imposed a six-year prison sentence on a man for drug trafficking.

Jeff Cabrera Magofna, 41, pleaded guilty last week to trafficking of a controlled substance (methamphetamine) before Superior Court Associate Judge Joseph N. Camacho, who handed down the six-year imprisonment term.

However, according to Camacho's order following the hearing, Magofna will serve the first three years day for day without the possibility of parole, probation, early release, work release or other similar programs while the remaining sentence is suspended.

The suspended part of the sentence may be imposed in whole or in part, though, if Magofna violated any law or Office of the Adult Probation rules, Camacho said.

Magofna was also given credit for 21 days of time served.

The judge, following the sentencing hearing, also vacated the jury trial scheduled for Sept. 19, 2022, before remanding Magofna to the Department of Corrections to start serving his sentence.

After serving his sentence, the defendant will be placed under supervised probation for a period of four years upon his release from prison.

During his hearing, Magofna was represented by court-appointed attorney Mark Scoggins while assistant attorney general Steven Kessel appeared for the government.

According to court documents, Magofna was initially charged with four counts of trafficking of a controlled substance, namely meth, and two counts of conspiracy to commit trafficking of a controlled substance. But, pursuant to the plea agreement he signed, the other charges against him were dismissed.

Meanwhile, Magofna's co-defendant, Joey Cabrera Duenas, 42, was charged with two counts of trafficking of a controlled substance, and two counts of conspiracy to commit trafficking of a controlled substance. The case against Duenas remains pending in court.

DOL to host job fair in August

The CNMI Department of Labor will be hosting a job fair at the Hyatt Regency Saipan on Aug. 26, 2022, from 9am to 3pm.

The in-person event will feature employers within the construction, manpower services, retail, and hospitality industries. The job fair is free and open to the public.

The department's theme for the job fair, "Rebuilding the Workforce of Tomorrow," is a call to address the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the CNMI's workforce. The department continues to strive to mitigate challenges caused by the pandemic by providing the means to enhance the islands' workforce population.

"We are continuing our collaboration with CNMI employers to boost their recruiting efforts for U.S. citizens as employees," said Labor Secretary Vicky Benavente. "This event is an opportunity for anyone who's looking for a job to meet with potential employers and ask their questions about vacancies, benefits, and other related employment details."

The CNMI State Workforce Development Board and the Workforce Investment Agency Division are Equal Opportunity employers/providers and auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities.

This event is 100% funded through the U.S. Department of Labor Employment and Training Administration Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Title I Grant totaling $1,523,110 for program year 2020.

Further information about the job fair is available at the department's website, http://www.marianaslabor.net. For immediate assistance or inquiries, call (670)664-3196 or (670)664-3190 or email jobfair2022.dol@gmail.com. ***(PR)***

Marianas Health Services, Inc.

Job Opening: Physical Therapist Aide

Job Summary: The Physical Therapist Aide assists the Physical Therapist in the implementation of patient rehabilitation programs to help improve patient mobility, function and strength.

Education: High School graduate with basic knowledge of therapeutic assistive methods and techniques in rehabilitation therapy.

Work Experience: At least one (1) year of work experience assisting in therapeutic activities.

To Apply: This job opportunity is for a full-time position. Interested applicants may submit their applications, resume, and/or other credentials at the Marianas Health Services Building, Ghiyeghi Street, San Jose, Saipan, CNMI Monday to Friday, 8:00 am to 5:00 pm. Applications may be sent via email to: info@marianashealth.com. Only U.S. qualified workers will be considered.

Marianas Health Services is an Equal Employment Opportunity employer.

Businesses invited to take the MBP survey; register for free biz summit

As preparations gear up for the first-ever Friends of Business Summit, small business owners are being strongly encouraged to take the Marianas Business Pride 2022 CNMI Small Business Survey by July 30, 2022.

The anonymous MBP 2022 CNMI Small Business Survey's focus is to gain a deep understanding of what small business owners encounter while starting up a business.

The CNMI Small Business Development Center Network, Saipan Chamber of Commerce, and the Governor's Council of Economic Advisers will use the data collected from the surveys to identify solutions to some of the challenges that business owners encounter. The goal is to gain insight that can be used to improve the business start-up process and provide better overall support.

The surveys are available in English, Korean, and Chinese online on GCEA's website at cnmieconomy.com. Printed surveys can be picked up and submitted at the Rota, Tinian, and Saipan mayors' offices. The survey will close at midnight on July 30, and the paper-based surveys can be submitted by the end of the business day on July 30.

Summit registration

The CNMI SBDCN, SCC, and GCEA are inviting business owners, managers, and those who took the small business survey to attend the Friends of Business Summit and luncheon on Aug. 10, 2022. The summit will feature guest speakers, presentations, and interactive booths to further the conversations surrounding local challenges, provide some support services, and create opportunities for networking and community-building.

The event is free to attend and seats are limited. Interested business owners and managers who would like to attend must register online at cnmieconomy.com by Aug. 5. Registration will not be available on the day of the event.

For more information, contact the Saipan Chamber of Commerce at (670) 234-7150 or send an email to executive@saipanchamber.com. ***(PR)***

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Business Pride
FRIENDS OF BUSINESS SUMMIT
AUGUST 10
2022
12:00 pm - 4:00 pm
Taga Hall, Saipan World Resort
Luncheon & Summit
REGISTER BY AUGUST 5
cnmieconomy.com
Registration is open for the free Summit and Luncheon event. Open to business owners and managers in the Marianas. Seats are limited.
Register by August 5, 2022 at cnmieconomy.com. Registration will not be available at the door.
TAKE THE 2022
SMALL BUSINESS SURVEY
Visit cnmieconomy.com
Online survey ends on July 30 at midnight.
Take the survey in English, Korean or Chinese.
AMERICA'S SBDC CNMI
SBA
GOVERNOR'S COUNCIL OF ECONOMIC ADVISERS
SAIPAN CHAMBER

MANGO
Marianas Alliance of Non-Governmental Organizations
Job Vacancy Announcement
PROJECT DIRECTOR
Interested applicants submit resume and cover letter to admin@mangocnmi.org

APAFS Fiduciary Events Week returns to Manila

After two years of postponing the Annual Fiduciary Events Week due to the pandemic restrictions, Asia Pacific Association for Fiduciary Studies is going back to Manila in November, with the same goal of equipping fiduciaries in the Asia Pacific region with the best practices in fiduciary stewardship.

As it commemorates over 20 years as a non-profit organization, APAFS has always prioritized regional understanding for each fiduciary. "The association exists to provide an avenue where fiduciaries from [Asia Pacific] and in other parts of the world will come together and learn from a practical standpoint. In the

See APAFS on Page 4

Pacific defense chiefs meet against backdrop of rising China

By LOLITA C. BALDOR
ASSOCIATED PRESS

SYDNEY (AP)—Defense chiefs from across the Indo-Pacific gathered this week to bolster their connections against a backdrop of China's ongoing campaign to expand its influence and military presence in the region.

Gen. Mark Milley, chairman of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, said the military leaders meeting for three days in Sydney are focused on "the whole situation with the rise of China, a free and open Pacific" and ensuring a peaceful and stable Indo-Pacific region.

"It's a big conference to coordinate our mutual security interests and discuss national security issues that apply to all of us," said Milley.

Military leaders from 26 nations are participating in the conference, and most of those are chiefs of defense. China was invited but said it would be unable to attend.

During a press conference Wednesday, Milley said the chiefs of defense discussed how they can cooperate more and make their militaries more interoperable, including with advanced technologies. He added that they also talked about military exercises.

He and Gen. Angus Campbell, Australia's chief of defense, didn't go into details. But Milley expanded on comments he made late last week about China's increasing aggressiveness in the region and the need for nations to ensure that the Pacific remains free and open to all.

Chinese intercepts of allied and partner aircraft in international airspace in the Pacific region have increased "several-fold" over the last five years, Milley said, calling Beijing's behavior "much more confrontational" than five to 15 years ago.

China's activity, he said, "seems to imply that they want to bully or dominate, as opposed to having a free and open" Pacific.

Asked whether the U.S. would increase its military presence in Australia or in other partner nations, Milley and Campbell said the discussions are ongoing and no decisions have been made. There are about 2,200 U.S. Marines in Darwin.

En route to the conference, Milley told reporters traveling that the Chinese military has become significantly more aggressive and dangerous in recent years.

U.S. President Joe Biden plans to speak to Chinese President Xi Jinping on Thursday, according to a U.S. official who declined to be identified ahead of the public announcement.

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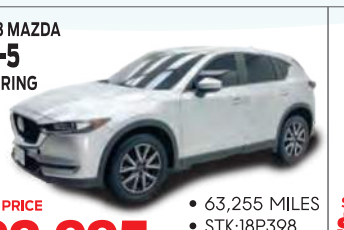
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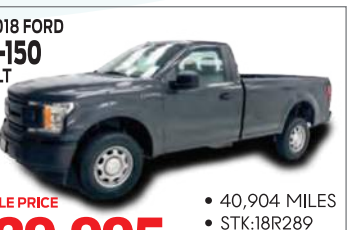
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Senatorial bet summoned to court over 10-year-old judgment

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
kimberly_esmores@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Independent senatorial candidate Andrew S. Salas faces possible contempt for failing to make payments toward a 2013 judgment in the amount of $14,851.09.

According to an order to show cause filed last Monday, Salas is ordered to appear before the Superior Court explain why has not been making payments toward an over 10-year-old judgment.

Salas was ordered appear in court on Aug. 22, at 10am and to explain why the court should not find him guilty of contempt and why he should not be punished for disobeying a previously issued order. Salas has been previously cited for contempt in the same case.

The order added that if Salas fails to appear, the court will have him arrested.

Associate Judge Wesley Bogdan will be presiding over the hearing.

According to attorney Michael White, who represents the plaintiff, Laura Jan Peterka, Salas willfully disobeyed a court order issued on April 4, 2013. White said Salas was ordered to pay $100 per month starting April 5, 2013; however, his last payment was back in 2017.

"His payments have totaled $8,800. The last payment received was May 3, 2017. The arrears were in the amount of $2,200 as of May 16, 2022," White stated.

White said Salas has knowledge of the order and was present in court when it was verbally given.

Former associate judge David Wiseman signed the judgment order against Salas back in 2013.

Peterka originally sued Salas for not paying back the money she lent him in the amount of $13,014.69 plus interest at a rate of 9% per year.

PhD candidate from NMI awarded $10K scholarship

By CHRYSTAL MARINO
chrystal_marino@saipantribune.com
CORRESPONDENT

Hawaii Gov. David Y. Ige presents Rica Ann Dela Cruz with the Robert Murakami Scholarship on July 20, 2022.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

A doctoral candidate from the CNMI was recently awarded the 2022 Robert Murakami Scholarship, which is worth $10,000, in recognition of her "outstanding academic achievement, excellent character, and potential for combining professional endeavors with community service in Hawai'i."

Hawaii Gov. David Y. Ige announced the award of the grant to CNMI-born Rica Ann Dela Cruz in a post on his official Facebook page. The $10,000 Robert Murakami Scholarship is for the 2022-2023 academic school year and was awarded on July 20, 2022.

Dela Cruz currently resides in Honolulu where she is seeking a Ph.D. in Public Health at the University of Hawaii at Manoa. Dela Cruz obtained her bachelor's degree from Bryn Mawr College in 2010 and her Master of Public Health from the University of California Los Angeles in 2016.

Upon receiving a Ph.D., Dela Cruz desires to help improve the health of residents in the CNMI and the rest of Micronesia through sharing her knowledge and inspiring more research. Her mission is to "expand cross-sectoral capacity building and also conduct community-based research that would produce culturally-tailored interventions and introduce evidence-based health policies" for those who are underserved in the Micronesia region.

The Robert Murakami Scholarship, also known as the Hawai'i Veterans Memorial Fund, was named after one of the founders of the fund, attorney Robert K. Murakami, and was chartered and endorsed by Hawaii Gov. Ingram Stainback in 1945.

QUAKE

From Page 1

was centered in a mountainous area of Abra province, said Renato Solidum, the head of the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology, who described the midmorning shaking as a major earthquake.

"The ground shook like I was on a swing and the lights suddenly went out. We rushed out of the office, and I heard screams and some of my companions were in tears," said Michael Brillantes, a safety officer of the Abra town of Lagangilang, near the epicenter.

"It was the most powerful quake I've felt and I thought the ground would open up," Brillantes told The Associated Press by cellphone.

At least four people died mostly in collapsed structures, including a villager hit by falling cement slabs in his house in Abra, where at least 25 others were injured. In Benguet province, a worker was pinned to death after a small building that was under construction collapsed in the strawberry-growing mountain town of La Trinidad.

Many houses and buildings had cracked walls, including some that collapsed in Abra, where President Ferdinand Marcos Jr., who took office less than a month ago, planned to travel Thursday to meet victims and local officials.

Marcos Jr. told a news conference he was in his office at the riverside Malacanang presidential palace complex when the chandeliers began swaying and making clanking sounds. "It was very strong," he said of the ground shaking.

The Red Cross issued a picture of a three-story building precariously leaning toward a debris-covered road in Abra. A video taken by a panicking witness showed parts of an old stone church tower peeling off and falling in a cloud of dust on a hilltop.

Patients, some in wheelchairs, and medical personnel were evacuated from at least two hospitals in Manila, about 300 kilometers (200 miles) south of Lagangilang, but were later told to return after engineers found only a few minor cracks on walls.

The quake's strength was lowered from the initial 7.3 magnitude after further analysis. The quake was set off by movement in a local fault at a depth of 17 kilometers (10 miles), the institute said, adding it expected damage and more aftershocks.

The Philippines lies along the Pacific "Ring of Fire," an arc of faults around the Pacific Ocean where most of the world's earthquakes occur. It is also lashed by about 20 typhoons and tropical storms each year, making it one of the world's most disaster-prone countries.

A magnitude 7.7 quake killed nearly 2,000 people in the northern Philippines in 1990.

DONATION

From Page 1

Yangetmai (D-Saipan), and Vicente Camacho (D-Saipan).

DeLeon Guerrero donated a television set worth $749, a printer worth $460, and ink worth $148. Magofna and Yangetmai shared the $1,000 cost for their donated items—one ukulele, one guitalele (a mini guitar), one five-gallon gas container, one Bluetooth speaker, one case of bananas, a case of seedless red grapes, a case of apple, a case of orange, and two cases of bowl noodles.

Camacho said he is donating a laptop that he will deliver as soon as it arrives.

DeLeon Guerrero said the funding for the donations came from their respective offices.

DeLeon Guerrero said they were saddened upon learning about the burglary at Man'amko Center, knowing that the center's congregants—the *man'amko* (elderly)—use the items to make their daily visit to the center enjoyable.

"Replacing what they lost will bring back their joy and laughter with their friends at the center," DeLeon Guerrero said.

Thousands of dollars' worth of musical equipment, tools, and a 32-inch flat-screen TV were stolen from the Man'amko Center during the burglary.

The Office on Aging said many of the stolen items were purchased using money from fundraisers conducted by the senior citizens who are members of the Man'amko Center.

MAFNAS

From Page 1

decision on the motion for TRO and preliminary injunction.

Last Monday, just a few days after receiving a memorandum from Atalig removing him as Customs director and reassigning him to the Department of Commerce, Mafnas filed a motion for a TRO and preliminary injunction against his "demotion."

Mafnas filed the motion for a TRO because he wanted the court to prevent Finance from removing him from his position as Customs and Biosecurity director or to otherwise reinstate him.

The plaintiffs argued that a TRO should be granted as the reassignment was illegal and was not motivated by the Department of Commerce's need for his expertise, but instead had everything to do with the political party he aligns himself with.

According to the complaint Hodson filed on behalf of Mafnas, she noted that on the afternoon of July 21, Mafnas was given a memo by Atalig, which purported to "reassign" him to the Department of Commerce as "director of Export, Importation, and Public Outreach" and to report to the secretary of Commerce. However, after contacting the Office of Personnel Management for information on this position, Mafnas learned that no such position exists.

The Department of Commerce is not a division of the Department of Finance; instead, the Department of Commerce is a separate government agency of the Commonwealth government established within the Executive Branch, she said.

"It is no secret that Mafnas is a supporter of the independent Palacios-Apatang gubernatorial ticket for the CNMI November 2022 general election, which ticket is running against the incumbent governor. Mafnas' constitutional right to vote freely and as he sees fit has been under fire for months, with a recent written communication/threat coming from the incumbent governor's chief of staff to Mafnas' niece on May 22, 2022, that if Mr. Mafnas is with the governor, in terms of the vision, then 'it is all good' and that the chief of staff, apparently speaking for the governor, sees no ethical conflict in removing a person who is 'unwilling or incapable of executing the executive direction,'" Hodson said.

"…Mafnas expects that this continued muzzling of his First Amendment rights and the retaliation against Mafnas' assertions of his freedom to vote as he chooses and not as he is told will continue into his 'reassigned position' at the Department of Commerce," Hodson added.

Mafnas started as a trainee with the Division of Customs in 1984 and has worked his way up within the agency. From 1998 to 2003, Mafnas served as the director of Customs, then from 2003 to 2013, he served as the director of Administration under the Department of Finance. Mafnas later returned to Customs and served as the director of Customs and Biosecurity from 2013 to July 21, 2022, when he was reassigned.

APAFS

From Page 2

past two decades with a pandemic underway, we understand that, as 'Guardians of Trusts,' we are doubly accountable with our vision. We are hopeful to witness a new generation of fiduciaries that has a competitive edge on what is relevant to the needs of their clients," said APAFS chair Dr. Wilfred Leon Guerrero. This year's FEW is packed with new learnings through a series of different training sessions. Other than bringing back the much-awaited Pacific Region Investment Conference, APAFS will share its newest offer this 2022, which is the Global Fiduciary Strategist. "We aim not only to identify, but also apply the practices that define a prudent investment process for investment stewards and advisors," it said in a news release. This year's FEW will consist of four different events from Nov. 14 to 18, 2022, at the New World Makati City Hotel, Manila, the Philippines. The week will begin with Fiduciary Essentials Training on Monday, Nov. 14, followed by two-day courses for Accredited Investment Fiduciary Training, and Global Fiduciary Strategist on Tuesday to Wednesday, Nov. 15-16. The trainings will culminate with the 20th Pacific Region Investment Conference on Nov. 17-18.

To register, visit bit.ly/registerapafsevents2022**.** Follow APAFS on Facebook or LinkedIn for more information, or email at admin@apafs.org. ***(PR)***

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Bill that honors retired U.S. Army Sgt. Maj. Atalig is now law

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Junior Reserve Officers' Training Corps building at the Rita H. Inos Junior/Senior High School in Liyo, Rota, will be renamed as the Sgt. Maj. Herman Manglona Atalig JROTC Building, soon after Gov. Ralph DLG Torres signed into law a local bill that enacts the name change.

Torres informed Senate President Jude U. Hofschneider (R-Tinian), and Rota Legislative Delegation co-chairs Rep. Donald M. Manglona (Ind-Rota) and Sen. Teresita A. Santos (Ind-Rota) that he signed Senate Local Bill 22-13, D1, into Rota Local Law 22-10 last Monday. The new law recognizes Atalig's "untiring and outstanding contributions to the Public School System and to the people of the Commonwealth."

The Rota Legislative Delegation unanimously passed the local bill, which Santos had authored, last July 1.

Santos said yesterday that she wrote Tuesday to Rota Mayor Efraim M. Atalig and Education Commissioner Dr. Alfred B. Ada about Torres' enactment of the local law.

Santos said that under the new law, the Rota mayor, in coordination with the Public School System, shall prepare a plan of dedication within 60 days from the effective date of this Act.

Santos said she and the RHI Junior/Senior High School principal briefly discussed a tentative date to ensure that the students' instructional hours are not interrupted.

Santos said the principal recommended to have the ribbon-cutting and unveiling of the newly named building during their flag ceremony that takes place every first Monday of the month.

The principal has tentatively scheduled the unveiling ceremony for Oct. 4, 2022.

Santos informed Atalig and Ada that the Rota delegation looks forward to participating in this special occasion.

Santos said Atalig served in the U.S. Army with valor and distinction and returned home to contribute to the quality of life of children by becoming the senior army instructor for the RHI JROTC Program.

At present, Atalig is an active member of the 17th CNMI State Board of Education.

Bogdan says he stands ready to continue serving the CNMI public

Stating that he has made the Northern Mariana Islands his home for almost 30 years, Wesley M. Bogdan said he stands ready to continue serving the public as an associate judge at the Superior Court.

In his letter of intent to seek retention on the bench in the Nov. 8 general election, Bogdan said it has been an honor to work as an associate judge these past five years.

"During this time, I have tried—to the best of my ability—to show patience, open-mindedness, courtesy, tact, firmness, understanding, compassion, and humility to all those who come before my bench," said the judge in his letter addressed to Commonwealth Election Commission executive director Kayla S. Igitol.

Bogdan personally submitted his letter of intent to CEC staff Christina Norita at the CEC office in Susupe last July 15.

He officially assumed the post of associate judge in November 2017. His term ends in August 2023.

Bogdan handles small claims. He said he has also conducted criminal jury trials, civil bench trials, and hundreds of other hearings. The judge said that, regardless of his personal views, his objective has always been to follow the law.

Bogdan formerly served as an assistant attorney general, assistant public defender, sole practitioner in private practice, in-house counsel for an international corporation, and legal counsel to both the Office of the Governor and Office of the Lt. Governor.

Bogdan has also obtained legal training at the National Judicial College, the Pacific Judicial Council, and numerous legal education courses and workshops.

In the CNMI, a judge's term is six years. ***(Ferdie de la Torre)***

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EMAIL: mwhite@saipan.com
ATTORNEY FOR PETITIONER

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

In the Matter of the Estate of DIONISIA PIALUR YTHEMAR, Deceased.] CIVIL ACTION] NO. 22-0158

NOTICE

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that Jo-Ann Kimiko Pialur Ythemar has filed a Petition for Letters of Administration upon the Estate of Dionisia Pialur Ythemar , deceased; and that the said Petition will be heard by the Court on THURSDAY, 25th of August 2022, at the hour of 10:00 a.m.

Notice is also given all heirs of and persons having claims against the Estate of Dionisia Pialur Ythemar, deceased, and to all persons claiming an interest in said Estate, that they shall file such claims with the Clerk of this Court within sixty (60) days from the first publication of this Notice. Copies of such claims should be provided to Michael A. White, Esq., The Law Offices of Michael A. White, LLC, P.O. Box 5222 CHRB, Saipan, MP 96950, Attorney for Petitioner. All claims not so filed shall be forever barred.

Dated: 25th of July 2022

/s/
JOSEPH N. CAMACHO, Associate Judge

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IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

In the Matter of the Estate of PAUL JOSEPH YTHEMAR, Deceased.] CIVIL ACTION] NO. 22-0157

NOTICE

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that Jo-Ann Kimiko Pialur Ythemar has filed a Petition for Letters of Administration upon the Estate of Paul Joseph Ythemar , deceased; and that the said Petition will be heard by the Court on THURSDAY, 25th of August 2022, at the hour of 10:00 a.m.

Notice is also given all heirs of and persons having claims against the Estate of Paul Joseph Ythemar, deceased, and to all persons claiming an interest in said Estate, that they shall file such claims with the Clerk of this Court within sixty (60) days from the first publication of this Notice. Copies of such claims should be provided to Michael A. White, Esq., The Law Offices of Michael A. White, LLC, P.O. Box 5222 CHRB, Saipan, MP 96950, Attorney for Petitioner. All claims not so filed shall be forever barred.

Dated: 25th of July 2022

/s/
JOSEPH N. CAMACHO, Associate Judge

Gerlyn Rose Moteisou Libunao, Pro se
P.O. Box 503014 CK
Saipan, MP 96950
670-285-7810

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

IN THE MATTER OF THE ESTATE OF: DOLORES MOTEISOU, Deceased, by GERLYN ROSE MOTEISOU LUBUNAO, Petitioner. : CIVIL ACTION NO. 22-0160 : **NOTICE OF HEARING AND NOTICE TO CREDITORS**

NOTICE is hereby given that a Petition for Letters of Administration seeking appointment of Gerlyn Rose Moteisou Libunao as Administrator for the Estate of DOLORES MOTEISOU (Deceased), was filed in the above-entitled Court. A hearing has been set for the above-entitled matter and will be held in the Commonwealth Superior Court located at the House of Justice-Guma Hustia-Imwal Aweewe, Susupe, Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands at 10:00 a.m. on the 25th day of August.

All persons having any objection to the petition or having a claim against the Estate or against the deceased should file their claim with the Clerk of Court of the Commonwealth Superior Court within sixty (60) days after the first publication of this notice.

DATED this 25th day of July 2022.

/s/
Clerk of Court

PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY
COMMONWEALTH HEALTHCARE CORPORATION

INVITATION TO BID
ITB22-CHCC/CGC-HTP-023

SUBMISSION DEADLINE: AUGUST 29th, 2022 TIME:10:00AM (CHST)

"PROCUREMENT OF VEHICLE – HTP'S TINIAN OFFICE"

INTERESTED PARTIES CAN DOWNLOAD THIS INVITATION TO BID FROM THE CHCC WEBSITE [WWW.CHCC.HEALTH]. ONCE AT THE SITE, NAVIGATE TO **REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS** TAB ON THE LEFT NAVIGATION BAR. CLICK ON THE URL FOR THIS RFP. YOU WILL BE REQUIRED TO ENTER DATA TO ALLOW US TO TRACK ALL REQUESTS FOR THIS OPPORTUNITY.

THE CHCC RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY AND ALL PROPOSAL AND TO WAIVE ANY IMPERFECTIONS IN ANY PROPOSAL, IF TO DO SO SHALL BE IN THE INTEREST OF THE CHCC. ALL PROPOSALS SHALL BECOME THE EXCLUSIVE PROPERTY OF THE COMMONWEALTH HEALTHCARE CORPORATION.

/S/ ESTHER L. MUNA
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

/S/ CORA P. ADA
DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT & SUPPLY

NOTICE OF INTENT TO FILE DISSOLUTION

Please take notice that Saipan Marianas Corporation intends to file articles of dissolution with the CNMI Registrar of Corporations anytime after this notice is made.
Anyone with a claim against the corporation is requested to submit it in accordance with the following:
1. The claim shall be made in writing and shall state the name of the claimant, the amount of the claim, the factual basis for the claim, and the name, mailing address, email address, and telephone number of the person who may be contacted by the corporation with respect to the claim.
2. The claim may be sent to: P.O. Box 504939, Saipan, MP 96950 or call 671-683-3844 or email spnmarianas.corp@gmail.com.
3. A claim against the corporation will be barred unless a processing to enforce the claim is commenced within five years after the publication of the notice.

Saipan Marianas Corporation
P.O. Box 504939, Saipan, MP 96950

COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY
Main Office: Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport
P.O. Box 501055 Saipan MP 96950-1055
Phone: (670) 237-6500/1 I Fax: (670) 234-5962
E-mail: cpa.admin@pticom.com
Website: https://cnmiports.com

JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT # 04-2022

Opening date: July 13, 2022 **Closing date: August 03, 2022**

Location: SAIPAN **SALARY**
Positions: (1) Internal Auditor — UNGRADED
(1) Accounts Clerk — PL 2/1 to 2/12 ($7.63/hr. to $13.04/hr.)
(1) AOA Controller-I — PL 5/1 to 5/12 ($8.83/hr. to $15.10/hr.)

Location: PORT OF SAIPAN **SALARY**
Positions: (1) Vessel Traffic Controller-I — PL 4/1 to 4/12 ($8.41/hr. to $14.38/hr.

Location: TINIAN **SALARY**
Positions: (2) General Maintenance I — PL 2/1 to 2/12 ($7.63/hr. to $13.04/hr.)

Employment Application must be accompanied with a copy of all required diploma/certificates and/or official sealed transcripts, original copy of recent police record not more than six (6) months old, original copy of U.S. Department of Defense Form DD214 for retired members or veterans of our Armed Forces, and other documents as required for the position. Public Law 11-70 requires that all male applicants age 18 to 25 years old must submit documentation evidencing his registration with the Federal Selective Service System. All applications and required documents must be submitted to the ***CPA Administration Office, 2nd Floor Arrival Building, Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport or CPA Administration Office Tinian International Airport or Benjamin Taisacan Manglona International Airport***. Failure to provide any of the required documents will result in automatic disqualification. Certain vacancies may require written and/or physical test. Selected applicants will be subjected to pre-employment drug screening, 10-year Criminal History Record Check and 49 CFR Part 1542.209(d) Requirements. CPA reserves the right to waive or implement other qualifications to meet its needs. The deadline for submission of applications and required documents to the CPA Administration Office (Saipan) or at the Tinian International Airport or Benjamin Taisacan Manglona International Airport is no later than **5:00 P.M. on Wednesday, August 03, 2022**.

Detailed information on qualifications and position descriptions for the above positions may be picked up along with the application form from Monday-Friday, 8:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M., except on holidays, at the CPA Administration Office (2nd Floor) of the Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport, Arrival Terminal or CPA Admin. Office at the Tinian International Airport or at the Benjamin Taisacan Manglona International Airport. For additional information, please contact the CPA Human Resources Office by email at lorna.tenorio@cnmiports.com or by phone at (670)237-6500.

CPA is an Equal Opportunity Employer and CPA hires those who are legally entitled to employment in the CNMI.

CHRISTOPHER S. TENORIO
Executive Director

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS
CNMI GOVERNMENT

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL
RFP NO.: DPW/SWMD22-RFP NO.: 42200133

SUBMISSION DATE: AUGUST 22, 2022 TIME: 10:00 A.M.

"Review and update existing Scope of Work (SOW) for the Landfill Operation and will incorporate current standards of landfill operation to improve the quality and function management required for the Marpi Sanitary Landfill Facility, Saipan".

COPIES OF THE SPECIFICATIONS MAY BE OBTAINED AT THE SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT DIVISION, LOWER BASE TRANSFER STATION, SAIPAN, DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

THE PROVISIONS OF THE CNMI PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS, NMIAC SECTION 70-30.3-725 AND 70-30.3-730 PROHIBITING GRATUITIES, KICCKBACKS AND CONTINGENT FEES SHAL APPLY.

The project package will be available on or after **July 25, 2022** at the Solid Waste Management Division, Lower Base, Transfer Station, Saipan.

A non-refundable payment of **One Hundred Dollars ($100.00)** is required for each set. Payment must be made to the CNMI Treasurer and a receipt of payment must be presented when obtaining the **Scope of Work at the Solid Waste Management Division, Lower Base Transfer Station required for each set.**

There will be a Pre-bid Conference for this project on **August 9, 2022, 9:00 a.m. local time** at the Solid Waste Management Division Conference Room, Lower Base Transfer Station, Saipan. The Prospective bidders are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the site. All questions regarding this project must be submitted in writing no later than **4:30 p.m, local time on August 12, 2022** to **Mr. Blas T. Mafnas, Director of Solid Waste Management Division, Lower Base Transfer Station**, Saipan or fax to (670) 322-2762. Response to questions shall be shared with prospective bidders.

THE CNMI GOVERNMENT RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS, OR PORTIONS THEREOF, AND WAIVE IMMATERIAL DEFECTS IF TO DO SO WOULD BE IN THE BEST INTERST OF THE CNMI GOVERNMENT.

/S/ JAMES A. ADA
SECRETARY, DPW

/S/ FRANCISCO C. AGUON
ACTING DIRECTOR,
DIVISION OF PROCUREMENT SERVICES

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
Commonwealth Office of Transit Authority
Office of the Governor
"Driving You Forward"

PUBLIC NOTICE

Please be advised that the Commonwealth Office of Transit Authority's (COTA) Call-A-Ride Saipan Demand Responsive Shared Ride Services and the COTA's Administrative Office will be closed on the following days for Professional Development.

Thursday, August 11, 2022
Friday, August 12, 2022

COTA's operational hours will resume on Saturday, **August 13, 2022.** We would like to remind our community to plan their trips accordingly. Thank you for your understanding and cooperation.

/s/ Alfreda Camacho Maratita
Special Assistant for Public Transportation

2nd Floor Rm. 216, Marianas Business Plaza, Susupe, Caller Box 10007, Saipan, MP 96950
Phone: (670) 664-2682; Fax: (670) 664-2692; Email: alfredac.maratita@gov.mp

9th Cycle Academy Graduation

After months of training, the 29 new Division of Customs and Biosecurity officers from the 9th Cycle Academy received their badges and their Basic Law Enforcement Certificate of Completion at their graduation ceremony on Monday, July 25, 2022, at the Saipan World Resort's Royal Taga Ballroom.

The academy was coordinated in partnership with the Northern Marianas College. The officers received training in multiple subjects that included constitutional and criminal law, report writing for law enforcement, officer survival skills, homeland security, transportation and border security, emergency vehicle operations, and firearms safety.

Finance Secretary David DLG Atalig addresses the 29 graduates of the Division of Customs and Biosecurity 9th Cycle Academy. NMC

The graduates stand at attention during the ceremony. NMC

NMC vice president for Administration and Advancement Frankie Eliptico gives his remarks during the 9th Cycle Academy graduation ceremony and encourages the graduates to pursue their college education. NMC

Division of Customs and Biosecurity 9th Cycle Academy graduate Frederick Ricky Encabo salutes his drill instructor, officer Mark Manaluz, upon receiving his badge and diploma. NMC

Bon A. Balce, one of the 29 Division of Customs and Biosecurity 9th Cycle Academy graduates, receives his badge from his mother. Balce and fellow graduate Alvin A. King represented Rota. NMC

Division of Customs and Biosecurity 9th Cycle Academy graduate and leadership awardee Kane Ybanez shakes drill instructor Manaluz's hand during the ceremony. NMC

The 29 graduates present arms at the Division of Customs and Biosecurity 9th Cycle Academy graduation ceremony. NMC

Gabrielle Coloma, a graduate, takes a photo with her family members after receiving her badge. NMC

DIVISION OF YOUTH SERVICES

DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY & CULTURAL AFFAIRS
COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

OFFICE OF THE ADMINISTRATOR
1st Floor, Building 1300, P.O. Box 501000 C.K., Saipan, MP 96950

PUBLIC HEARING ANNOUNCEMENT

This is to inform the general public that the Division of Youth Services under the auspices of the Department of Community & Cultural Affairs will be conducting a Public Hearing on the Social Services Block Grant (SSBG) and Consolidated Block Grant (CBG) FY 2023 Intended Use Plan for the following:

ISLAND	DATE	TIME	VENUE
Tinian	August 4, 2022	5:30 p.m.	Tinian Youth Center
Rota	August 8, 2022	5:30 p.m.	Sinapalo Youth Center
Saipan	August 9, 2022	5:00 p.m.	Kagman Community Center

Electronic copy of the FY2023 Consolidated Block Grant Intended Use Plan draft may be viewed on the links below:

DYS Website: www.dys.gov.mp
DCCA Website: www.dcca.gov.mp
CNMI Governor's Website: www.gov.mp

For more information, or to retrieve a hard copy, you may contact 237-1000/1/2 or contact Vivian T. Sablan, DYS Administrator at 237-1003 or via email: vsablan@dys.gov.mp .

/s/ Vivian T. Sablan
DYS Administrator

/s/ Joseph P. Deleon Guerrero
DCCA Secretary

Opinion

Hafa Adai!
Saipan Tribune
THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER
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MEMBER

The Associated Press | Pacific Islands News Association

EDITORIAL

Elderly poor should top college students for aid

"Don't tell me what you value. Show me your budget, and I'll tell you what you value." –Joe Biden

If Biden looked at the budgets of about half of older Americans, he could tell that they value simply hanging on.

Data from University of Massachusetts-Boston shows that more than half of older women in the U.S. don't have enough income to afford essential expenses, according to The Hill.

UMass Boston's Elder Index reveals that more than half of older women who live alone are classified as poor under federal poverty standards, while 45% of men are in the same financial shape. The Department of Health and Human Services' average poverty guideline for 2021 is $12,880 per year for a single American.

We can thank COVID-19 for some of this—the pandemic resulted in the highest unemployment rates seen for persons aged 55 and older in nearly half a century.

House lawmakers recently pushed for Joe Biden to declare climate change a national emergency, but if there's something that deserves that kind of all-hands-on-deck action, it's that half of older Americans who live alone are trying to live on about $12,880 a year.

Amid soaring inflation.

Biden and the Democrats have a lot on their plate, agenda-wise. They've all bellied up to the progressive issue buffet, and student loan forgiveness was a hot item (Biden mulling $10,000 per borrower, the far left-leaners calling for $50,000 per borrower to be erased.)

Student loan payments have been on pause for over two years due to the pandemic, but the final extension of this suspension is set to end Aug. 31, as Forbes reported.

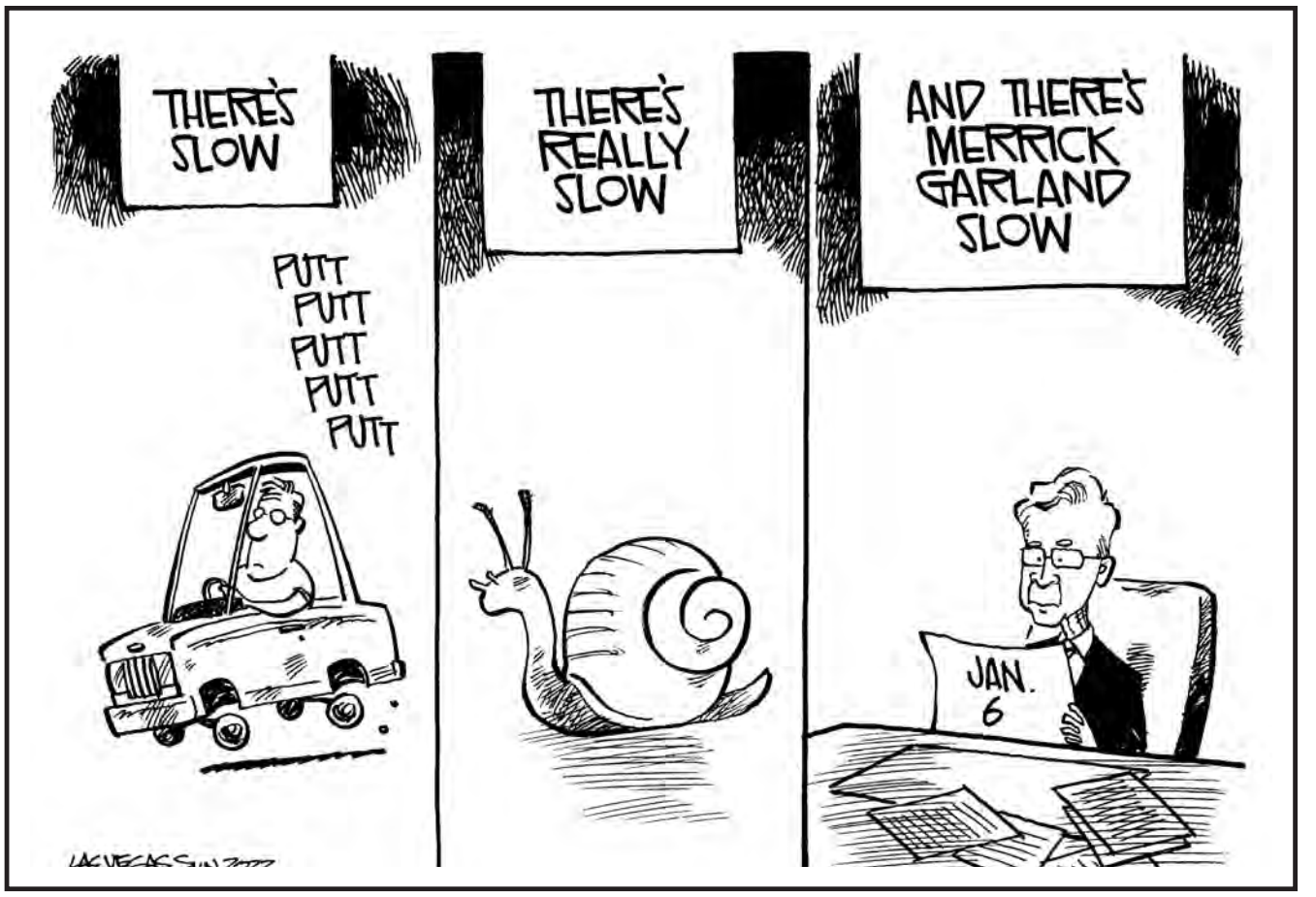
That's also Biden's self-imposed deadline for deciding whether to forgive student loan debt, and by how much. Biden told reporters he would decide on broad student loan cancellation "by the end of August."

The premise to canceling student loan debt is simple: The amounts owed are enormous, the debt load stifling, and having to pay it back means putting other purchases like a home on the back burner for years.

It's all about letting people off the hook for their decisions so they can have an easier future. The cost to taxpayers, should Biden go the $10,000 per borrower route, is $373 billion, according to the Brookings Institution.

Helping seniors in poverty belongs higher up on the agenda triage. People who've labored for decades with nothing but Social Security to rely on aren't looking for an easy way to escape responsibilities. Many lost jobs during the pandemic and haven't been able to recover, or have had nest eggs depleted by medical bills. A lifetime of retail or service industry wages doesn't set a worker up for a lush

See ELDERLY on Next Page



It's time to remember the civilian survivors of the unresolved Korean War

By JI-YEON YUH
Chicago Tribune

Ji-Yeon Yuh is an associate professor of history at Northwestern University.

Few Americans know that the Korean War, often referred to in the United States as the "forgotten war," never officially ended. Although the United States and North Korea stopped military battles when they signed the armistice on July 27, 1953, they never negotiated a peace agreement to formally end hostilities.

Korea remains divided, separated by one of the most militarized borders on Earth, with South Korea and the U.S. on one side and North Korea on the other. Because there is no peace agreement, military attacks from either side can resume at any time.

For our own future as Americans, we need stable, lasting peace in Korea. The United States can take the lead by negotiating a peace agreement and normalizing relations with North Korea. Once military attacks are no longer a constant threat, America, North Korea and South Korea can focus on the essential business of strengthening ties for mutual nuclear deterrence and economic prosperity.

On July 27, the 69th anniversary of the signing of the Korean War armistice, I will be among the hundreds of people traveling to Washington to attend the dedication ceremony of the new Korean War Veterans Memorial Wall of Remembrance. The remembrance wall honors the more than 36,000 Americans and 7,100 supporting Korean soldiers who died during the war.

While I salute them, I am also remembering the millions of Korean civilians who survived the war, the estimated 3 million who died during the war, and the hundreds of thousands of separated family members. Memorializing them would go a long way toward helping to heal the wounds of this decades-old conflict that remains unresolved.

Recognizing civilian survivors in our midst—people like my parents—would also help everyone move toward the restorative closure necessary for peace to last. My parents emigrated from Korea to Chicago in 1970, and unlike so many of their generation, they talked about the war. I grew up hearing stories about their experiences was part of our daily family life. As an adult, I came to understand that telling me these stories was a form of therapy and a way to preserve family history.

When the war broke out, my father hid for days in a hole in the ground by the outhouses, listening to B-52s strafe his beloved hometown and surrounding farmland. He eventually fled the north with his parents, brother and sister. They left behind many family members, including my father's two brothers and their families, his aunts and uncles, cousins and grandparents.

His family was placed in a refugee camp, but he promptly left, seeking work that would help him feed them. He was only 15.

He found work in a soldiers' lounge and survived for weeks eating the sugar that fell off their doughnuts. Doughnuts had to be accounted for, sugar did not. He also scrounged for odd jobs, doing laundry for the soldiers, fetching water and running errands, earning sometimes coins and sometimes food. After a few months, he returned to his family with a huge sack of American packaged goods: Kraft cheese, Vienna sausages, Spam.

He is 87 now, a retired Presbyterian minister, and still longing for his hometown, now in North Korea.

My mother and her family were among the many Koreans who fled Seoul and headed south for Busan. They walked most of the way. There, she nearly lost her mother, and it was pure luck that they ran into each other on the street.

After they returned to Seoul, shrapnel hit my mother's arm, gouging out a long chunk of flesh. That gouge is still there, the scar white, sunken and puckered. Now 85, she is a retired pediatrician.

One of the most tragic consequences of the ongoing Korean War and national division is the separation of families. Like my family, most Korean families have some connection to someone in the northern half of Korea. While North and South Korea have held reunions between separated families, the United States has never participated.

The ban on U.S. citizens traveling to North Korea imposed by the State Department in 2017 has obstructed Korean Americans like me and my parents from visiting family members on their own. With normalized relations and peace, Korean Americans can reunite with their long-lost loved ones.

In a hopeful sign, there has been increasing recognition of the need to end the Korean War once and for all. H.R.3446, the Peace on the Korean Peninsula Act, calls for formally ending the Korean War and replacing the armistice with a peace agreement and is supported by 42 co-sponsors, including Illinois Reps. Jesus "Chuy" Garcia, Jan Schakowsky and Bobby Rush.

As we commemorate the sacrifice of soldiers, both U.S. soldiers and the minority of ROK South Korean soldiers who augmented U.S. troops, let us also remember the civilians, those who survived, those who died, and those who still mourn for families left behind. And let us prove that their sacrifice was not in vain by finally bringing an end to America's longest war, the Korean War.

Working to get Marianas gov't workers their full SS benefit

By GREGORIO KILILI CAMACHO SABLAN
Special to the Saipan Tribune

Gregorio Kilili Camacho Sablan is a member of the 117th U.S. Congress and is the delegate of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

Commonwealth government workers, preparing for retirement, have come to me concerned their Social Security benefits are less than expected because of the Windfall Elimination Provision, WEP.

I understand the bind people are in because of the decision by the Commonwealth government decades ago to keep its workers out of Social Security. Early in my career in Congress I successfully worked to get our government workers transitioned back into this important federal pension system.

But some government workers, when they start receiving Social Security, are subject to WEP, if they are also collecting benefits from the Northern Mariana Islands Retirement Fund.

Their situation is not unique. Two million other Americans also have their Social Security reduced because they receive a pension from an employer who did not withhold Social Security taxes.

For that reason, I am a cosponsor of H.R. 82—the Social Security Fairness Act of 2021—that would eliminate the Windfall Elimination Provision and allow more Marianas retirees to collect their full Social Security benefit.

And as long as we are on the subject, H.R. 82 surpassed 290 cosponsors, receiving enough support to place the bill on the House Consensus Calendar, teeing it up for a possible floor vote in the House in September. The legislation has bipartisan support, with 206 Democratic and 87 Republican cosponsors.

In the meantime, government workers planning for retirement should consult with the Social Security office for a calculation of their potential benefits. It will be different for each person depending on their work history.

Social Security also mails a statement every five years to anyone who has not set up an online my Social Security account (https://www.ssa.gov/myaccount/). The statement gives you a record of your tax contributions and yearly earnings and estimates your future benefit. People over the age of 60 should receive their statement yearly.

As always, your congressional offices on Saipan, Tinian, and Rota are ready to help you when you have a problem with Social Security or any federal agency.

The Jan. 6 hearings hit the bull's-eye

By JONATHAN BERNSTEIN
Bloomberg Opinion

Jonathan Bernstein is a Bloomberg Opinion *columnist covering politics and policy. He taught political science at the University of Texas at San Antonio and DePauw University and wrote* A Plain Blog About Politics.

What was once billed as six hearings over two-plus weeks by the House Select Committee investigating the attack on the U.S. Capitol of Jan. 6, 2021, has now reached a break after eight hearings, stretched out over more than a month, with more promised in September. The committee has done about as good a job with that time as possible.

It's found a way to take a well-known story of a president who attempted to overturn an election and keep the focus on the big picture of exactly what former President Donald Trump and his allies did to undermine the republic, while at the same time filling in lots of relevant and fascinating new details. The inquiry also planted within that story a number of sidebars likely to spark interest from the press and in social media.

Thursday night's unnecessary but entertaining example was a swipe at Sen. Josh Hawley, R-Mo., who famously raised a fist in solidarity with the mob — only, as the committee showed with new footage, to run for his life from the rioters a few hours later. It was a perfect made-for-social, comic-relief moment while taking nothing away from the seriousness of the proceedings.

So the committee is doing well. Does it matter? Yeah. It does.

One obvious audience going into the hearings were the journalists in the nonaligned media. For them, the hearings are basically a framing operation: The committee is trying to get them to cover Trump and his allies as opponents of democracy, rather than as opponents of Democrats. As long as the story is Democrats against Republicans, nonaligned media are going to be tempted to treat the story as if both sides should be treated as equals. But if the story is Trump against democracy, then those same journalists will be more comfortable siding with democracy.

That kind of framing was helped by giving the two Republicans on the committee, especially Wyoming's Liz Cheney, a central role. On Thursday, with Committee Chair Bennie Thompson isolating with a mild case of COVID-19, Cheney (and not the next-ranking Democrat) presided. It's been helped, too, by the parade of former Trump administration officials who are testifying against the former president. But it's been helped most by just holding the attention of politics professionals and forcing them to reckon with how badly Trump violated his oath of office, and how monstrous his actions were.

A second audience was those Republican party actors who are neither die-hard Trump fans nor never-Trumpers—those Republicans who recognize what Trump is, but have usually gone along with him and his supporters for a variety of reasons. For them, the big case to make is that Trump is more dangerous to the party than to those in the party who oppose him. It's not clear whether the hearings are having much effect on them or not. If Trump has lost support from this cohort, it may be more because of his limited success promoting candidates during the 2022 primaries. But his inability to put the 2020 election behind him doesn't seem to be helping him with this group within the party.

And that points to an important audience that I didn't recognize going in: Trump himself. Perhaps he would be focused on 2020, anyway. But surely the committee is helping fix his attention there. That means that Trump has been attacking Cheney and the Republican witnesses, which doesn't do Republicans trying to win the 2022 midterms any good. It probably makes the case that Trump is yesterday's news more compelling (even though, as we learned in the wobbly outtakes from a Trump statement recorded on Jan. 7, 2021, Trump finds "yesterday" a hard word to say). With the conditions otherwise excellent for a strong Republican midterm performance in November, the hearings are a good reminder of how disruptive Trump can be for his own party.

Plenty of Republican party actors are still solidly in Trump's camp. The best comic relief from Thursday night's session came from the House Republicans' Twitter account, which declared early in the hearing, "This is all heresy." The social media managers eventually managed to replace "heresy" with "hearsay," which was scarcely more accurate. There's a ton of firsthand evidence; many of those who could give firsthand evidence are refusing to testify; and this isn't a trial, but a congressional hearing.

But "heresy" perfectly captured the sense of cultish belief in Trump as the only defense his supporters have. Almost two years after Trump lost the 2020 election, he's still claiming against all the evidence that he won in a landslide, despite having been told by all of his own campaign professionals that he lost.

Republicans can choose to avoid heresy and stick with Trump. But they know where that got them. And Cheney and her colleagues on the Jan. 6 committee are doing what they can to remind them.

For the good of the country, Biden shouldn't run again

By RICH LOWRY
(c) 2022 by King Features Synd., Inc.

Rich Lowry is editor of the National Review.

Perhaps the best decision Joe Biden could make as president is to stand down.

It would be a welcome act of statesmanship and self-awareness if the 79-year-old president dropped the insistence that he's running for a second term, and instead announced sometime after the November midterms that he isn't running again.

He was too old to run in 2020 but made his way into the office he had coveted for decades by default.

In two and a half years, Biden won't be any younger and the chances of something going catastrophically wrong only increase with time.

The country's experience with a 78- and 79-year-old president hasn't been pretty. Just wait until Biden is 82 (at the time of his theoretical second inauguration), or 84 (after the second midterms), or 86 (at the end of his second term).

A New York Times report confirms about what you'd expect of White House aides. They fear that Biden, who increasingly shuffles when he walks, will trip over a wire. They hold their breath hoping he can get to the end of remarks without making a gaffe. They generally don't have events for him at night and try to keep the weekends free.

In an office that requires vigor and forcefulness, he's mumbly and bleached out. In a position that makes young men suddenly look much older, he's already quite aged. In a job where words matter, he can't keep his straight.

Yes, there have been elderly leaders of nations who have been unquestioned giants--Konrad Adenauer, Charles de Gaulle, Ariel Sharon. No one is mistaking Biden for a statesman of such caliber, though. He's more like President Jimmy Carter with a quarter century more on the odometer.

Even if in the unlikely event Biden's age isn't affecting how he can do his job now, it will at some point.

Then, there are the disaster scenarios. We should all hope that Biden lives to be a 100 but were he to die in office of natural causes, it would be a significant national trauma. We haven't had a president die in office in half a century and it would create comparisons to the gerontocracy of the late Soviet Union.

If anyone thinks American politics is poisonous now, just wait till there's an unelected president (the vice president would succeed Biden in this scenario) and an unelected vice president appointed by the unelected president. All this would be the process set out by the 25th Amendment; it would generate legitimacy concerns all the same.

If a health event prevented Biden from performing his duties, meanwhile, it would create a crisis at the top of our government. The natural tendency of politicians and their loyalists is to be less than forthcoming about health problems. What Edith Wilson did when Woodrow Wilson had an incapacitating stroke--hide it as much as possible and carry on regardless--wouldn't be possible in the current media age. That doesn't mean there'd be transparency.

The process for sidelining a debilitated president under the 25th Amendment is a mess, especially if the president doesn't think he's incapable of discharging his duties--such a scenario would make an impeachment look neat and clean by comparison.

Perhaps none of this would ever come to pass and a reelected Biden would make it to the finish line with ease, proving that 85 is the new 75. It's also true that anything could happen to anyone of any age--even a 45-year-old president could fall ill. But the longer Biden serves, the higher the risks.

And for what? Biden isn't uniquely gifted, ideologically compelling, irresistibly likable, or very good at being president. His claim to be the only Democrat who can beat Donald Trump in 2024 looks more attenuated by the day.

In short, there's no good reason for Biden not to make the best call of his presidency and prepare for retirement.

ELDERLY

From Page 8

Social Security check.

Aging shouldn't be a ticket to poverty.

Congress has its share of senior members, but they have health care, six-figure salaries and are likely not choosing between paying the light bill or buying enough food to eat.

As the Brookings Institution reported, the median income of households with student loans is $76,400, and 7% are below the poverty line. Among those making payment on their loans (and who would have an immediate cash flow benefit from forgiveness), the median income is $86,500, and 4% are in poverty.

Biden—show us who you're lifting out of poverty, and we'll tell you what you value.

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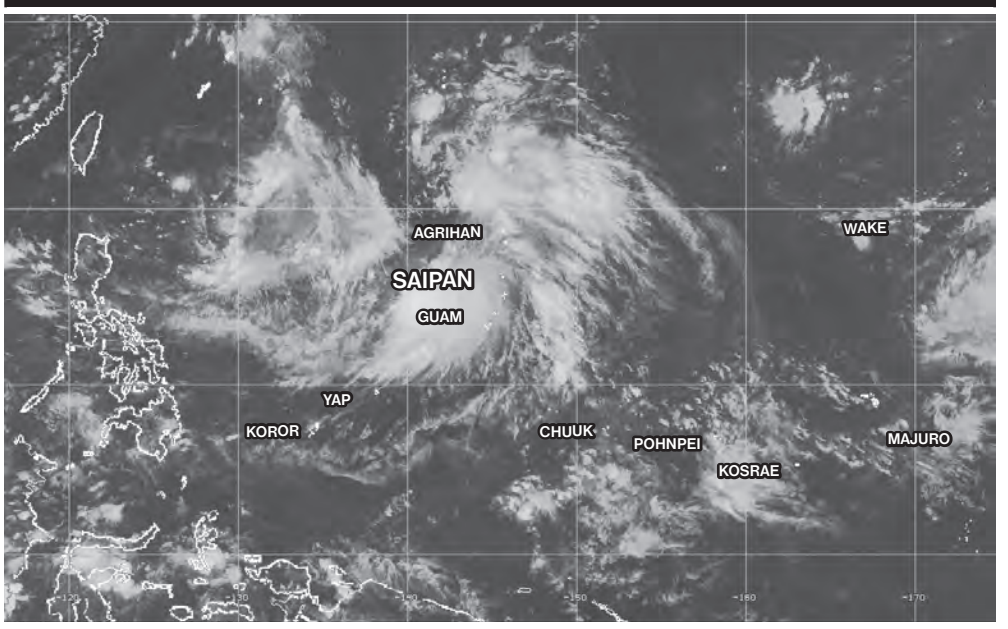
The Weather

5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN

TODAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY
Isolated showers. Partly sunny	Scattered showers and thunderstorms. Mostly cloudy	Mostly sunny	Mostly sunny	A chance of showers. Partly sunny
86º / 77º	87º / 77º	87º / 81º	87º / 77º	87º / 76º

YESTERDAY'S SATELLITE IMAGE



PICTURE TIME: 9:55 AM, WEDNESDAY, JULY 27, 2022

Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

Satellite shows heavy showers and thunderstorms northwest of the Marianas, associated with a developing tropical disturbance. The buoys reveal combined seas of 4 to 6 feet composed of an east trade-wind swell and south wind waves.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

MICRONESIA	▲ ▼ °F	
Guam and Rota	Cloudy	88° / 79°
Palau	Thunderstorms	81° / 75°
Yap	Thunderstorms	84° / 78°
Chuuk	Thunderstorms	88° /79°
Pohnpei	Showers	83° / 77°
Kosrae	Cloudy	82° / 79°
Majuro	Thunderstorms	85° / 79°

DAY	SUNRISE	SUNSET
Today	5:58 AM	6:48 PM
Friday	5:58 AM	6:48 PM
Saturday	5:58 AM	6:47 PM
Sunday	5:59 AM	6:47 PM
Monday	5:59 AM	6:47 PM

DAY	MOONRISE	MOONSET	MOONRISE
Today	5:14 AM	9:18 PM	-
Friday	6:06 AM	7:22 PM	-
Saturday	6:58 AM	8:03 PM	-
Sunday	7:48 AM	8:42 PM	-
Monday	8:38 AM	8:42 PM	-

AROUND THE GLOBE	▲ ▼ °F	
Auckland	Cloudy	56° / 44°
Beijing	Partly Cloudy	91° / 73°
Hong Kong	Partly Cloudy	89° / 77°
Honolulu	Showers	76° / 73°
London	Partly Cloudy	80° / 66°
Los Angeles	Sunny	87° / 61°
Manila	Thunderstorms	90° / 79°
Melbourne	Cloudy	62° / 49°
Miami	Thunderstorms	86° / 78°
New York	Partly Cloudy	81° / 64°
Osaka	Cloudy	85° / 74°
Paris	Showers	75° / 60°
Busan	Mostly Cloudy	80° / 72°
Rome	Sunny	91° / 66°
Salem	Sunny	90° / 66°
San Francisco	Mostly Sunny	78° / 52°
Seoul	Partly Cloudy	87° / 79°
Tokyo	Cloudy	87° / 73°
Washington, DC	Partly Cloudy	77° / 65°

TIDES: SAIPAN HARBOR TODAY		FEET
1:46 AM	Low Tide	1.41
6:21 AM	High Tide	1.89
1:51 PM	Low Tide	-0.03
9:03 PM	High Tide	1.91

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF JULY 18, 2022

DEPARTURES

SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)

UA117	9:50AM	10:30AM	Daily
UA156	6:30PM	7:15PM	6

GUAM-MANILA (MNL)

PR 111	6:00AM	8:00AM	Daily
UA193	7:05PM	10:55PM	5 via Palau
UA183	7:10PM	9:10PM	Daily

SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)

UA117/183	9:50AM	9:10PM	Daily via Guam
UA117/193	9:50AM	10:55PM	5 via Guam, Palau

SAIPAN-INCHEON (ICN)

TW9308	3:30PM	7:20PM	Daily
7C3405	3:30PM	7:25PM	3, 4, 6
RS112	3:45PM	7:30PM	3, 6 up to July 2 only
7C3405	3:50PM	7:45PM	7
OZ624	4:00PM	7:40PM	3, 6

SAIPAN-BUSAN (PUS)

7C3451	2:00PM	5:20PM	3, 7
BX621	3:10PM	6:30PM	3, 7

ARRIVALS

GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN

UA174	8:00AM	8:45AM	Daily
UA112	4:40PM	5:30PM	6

MANILA (MNL)-GUAM

PR110	10:00PM	4:00AM+1	Daily
UA184	10:25PM	4:25AM+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7
UA192	10:25PM	6:15AM+1	5 via Palau
UA184	11:50PM	5:40AM+1	5

MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN

UA184/174	10:25PM	8:45AM+1	1,2,3, 4, 6,7 via Guam
UA192/174	10:25PM	8:45AM+1	5 via Palau, Guam
UA184/174	11:50PM	8:45AM+1	5 via Guam

INCHEON (ICN)-SAIPAN

7C3406	8:30AM	2:10PM	3, 4, 6, 7
RS111	8:45AM	2:05PM	3, 6 up to July 2 only
TW9307	9:00AM	2:30PM	4, 6, 7
OZ623	9:00AM	2:30PM	3, 6
TW9307	9:15AM	2:30PM	1, 2, 3, 5

BUSAN (PUS)-SAIPAN

7C3452	8:00AM	1:00PM	3, 7
BX621	8:00AM	1:10PM	3, 7

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); UA United Airlines; PR, Philippine Airlines; TW, T'Way Air; OZ, Asiana Airlines; 7C, Jeju Air; BX, Air Busan • ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. *(The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)*

STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF JUNE 1, 2022

SAIPAN TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
1301	SAIPAN	ROTA	8:30	9:00	Daily
1302	SAIPAN	ROTA	11:00	11:30	Mon/Wed/Fri
1302	SAIPAN	ROTA	12:00	12:30	Tues/Thurs/Sat/Sun
1303	SAIPAN	ROTA	15:30	16:00	Daily

ROTA TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
3101	ROTA	SAIPAN	9:30	10:00	Daily
3102	ROTA	SAIPAN	13:00	13:30	Tues/Thurs/Sat/Sun
3102	ROTA	SAIPAN	14:00	14:30	Mon/Wed/Fri
3103	ROTA	SAIPAN	16:30	17:00	Daily

ROTA TO GUAM

LIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
3401	ROTA	GUAM	12:00	12:30	Mon/Wed/Fri

GUAM TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
4301	GUAM	ROTA	13:00	13:30	Mon/Wed/Fri

SAIPAN TO TINIAN

FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
1202	SAIPAN	TINIAN	8:00	8:15	Daily
1203	SAIPAN	TINIAN	9:00	9:15	Daily
1204	SAIPAN	TINIAN	10:00	10:15	Daily
1208	SAIPAN	TINIAN	14:00	14:15	Daily
1209	SAIPAN	TINIAN	15:00	15:15	Daily
1210	SAIPAN	TINIAN	16:00	16:15	Daily
1211	SAIPAN	TINIAN	17:00	17:15	Daily

TINIAN TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
2102	TINIAN	SAIPAN	8:30	8:45	Daily
2103	TINIAN	SAIPAN	9:30	9:45	Daily
2104	TINIAN	SAIPAN	10:30	10:45	Daily
2108	TINIAN	SAIPAN	14:30	14:45	Daily
2109	TINIAN	SAIPAN	15:30	15:45	Daily
2110	TINIAN	SAIPAN	16:30	16:45	Daily
2111	TINIAN	SAIPAN	17:30	17:45	Daily

STOP THE SPREAD

The Governor's COVID-19 Task Force and Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. continue to encourage residents within the Marianas to practice social distancing, which means avoiding close contact with people in order to avoid catching the virus yourself and to avoid passing it on to others.

■ Stay home as much as possible. Avoid unnecessary travel or public places.

■ Avoid social gatherings in groups of more than 10.

■ Choose drive-thru, take-out, or delivery options, or outdoor seating, if available, when dining in.

■ Send only one healthy adult from the household run necessary errands, such as getting groceries or picking up medications. Leave children, elderly, and other vulnerable people at home as much as possible. When returning home from an errand, wash your hands before doing anything else.

■ Older adults and people with chronic medical conditions are at higher risk of getting very sick from this illness. People at high risk should stay at home as much as possible.

■ Create a household plan of action, https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/checklisthousehold-ready.html

■ Ensure a 30-day supply of all medicines.

Continue good hand hygiene

■ Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water, avoid touching your face, cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or your sleeve.

■ Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not readily available.

Know the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and what to do if you become symptomatic

■ Stay home when you are sick and if you recently traveled to a place with COVID-19. Self-quarantine means:

• Choosing a room in your house that can be used to separate sick household members from others.

• Washing your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.

• Avoiding touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.

• Limiting visitors

CHCC appreciates the patience and understanding of the community at this time. To obtain general information about the CNMI COVID-19 response, contact the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force Hotline at 287-0046, 287-0489, 287-1089. These numbers are available Monday to Sunday, 7:30am - 4:30pm.

For medical information about COVID-19, reach out to the COVID-19 Infoline at the following numbers: 285-1672/1352. These numbers are available Monday to Friday, 7:30am - 4:30pm.

For mental health support and helpful tips during a crisis, call the Mental Health Support Line at 285-1856, 323-6560, 323-6561 These numbers are available Monday to Friday, 7:30am - 4:30 pm. For the 24/7 Disaster Distress Helpline, call SAMSHA at 1-800-985-5990.

For more information about DIY face coverings, visit https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cloth-face-cover.html

For more information about CHCC programs, follow CHCC on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter at @cnmichcc, check out our website at www.chcc.gov.mp or call us at (670) 234-8950.

For more information on the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force, visit www.governor.gov.mpand, follow @GovernorCNMI on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.

This health advisory may be found online at http://www.chcc.gov.mp/pressrelease.html and at www.governor.gov.mp/covid-19.

Rumor control

During crises like this, oftentimes the spread of misinformation is just as dangerous as the virus itself. The CNMI is reminded to only share official and verified notices, press releases, and advisories from the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force and CHCC.

Source: Office of the Governor

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Business

US economy sending mixed signals: Here's what it all means

WASHINGTON (AP)—The U.S. economy is caught in an awkward, painful place. A confusing one, too.

Growth appears to be sputtering, home sales are tumbling and economists warn of a potential recession ahead. But consumers are still spending, businesses keep posting profits and the economy keeps adding hundreds of thousands of jobs each month.

In the midst of it all, prices have accelerated to four-decade highs, and the Federal Reserve is desperately trying to douse the inflationary flames with higher interest rates. That's making borrowing more expensive for households and businesses.

The Fed hopes to pull off the triple axel of central banking: Slow the economy just enough to curb inflation without causing a recession. Many economists doubt the Fed can manage that feat, a so-called soft landing.

AP

Pedestrians pass the New York Stock Exchange on July 14, 2022, in New York.

Surging inflation is most often a side effect of a red-hot economy, not the current tepid pace of growth. Today's economic moment conjures dark memories of the 1970s, when scorching inflation co-existed, in a kind of toxic brew, with slow growth. It hatched an ugly new term: stagflation.

The United States isn't there yet. Though growth appears to be faltering, the job market still looks quite strong. And consumers, whose spending accounts for nearly 70% of economic output, are still spending, though at a slower pace.

So the Fed and economic forecasters are stuck in uncharted territory. They have no experience analyzing the economic damage from a global pandemic. The results so far have been humbling. They failed to anticipate the economy's blazing recovery from the 2020 recession—or the raging inflation it unleashed.

Even after inflation accelerated in spring of last year, Fed Chair Jerome Powell and many other forecasters downplayed the price surge as merely a "transitory" consequence of supply bottlenecks that would fade soon.

It didn't.

Now the central bank is playing catch-up. It's raised its benchmark short-term interest rate three times since March. Last month, the Fed increased its rate by three-quarters of a percentage point, its biggest hike since 1994. The Fed's policymaking committee is expected to announce another three-quarter-point hike Wednesday.

Economists now worry that the Fed, having underestimated inflation, will overreact and drive rates ever higher, imperiling the economy. They caution the Fed against tightening credit too aggressively.

"We don't think a sledgehammer is necessary," Ian Shepherdson, chief economist at Pantheon Macroeconomics, said this week.

Here's a look at the economic vital signs that are sending frustratingly mixed signals to policymakers, businesses and forecasters:

THE OVERALL ECONOMY

As measured by the nation's gross domestic product—the broadest gauge of output—the economy has looked positively sickly so far this year. And steadily higher borrowing rates, engineered by the Fed, threaten to make things worse.

"Recession is likely," said Vincent Reinhart, a former Fed economist who is now chief economist at Dreyfus and Mellon.

After growing at a 37-year high 5.7% last year, the economy shrank at a 1.6% annual pace from January through March. For the April-June quarter, forecasters surveyed by the data firm FactSet estimate that growth equaled a scant 0.95% annual rate from April through June. (The government will issue its first estimate of April-June growth on Thursday.)

Some economists foresee another economic contraction for the second quarter. If that happened, it would further escalate recession fears. One informal definition of recession is two straight quarters of declining GDP. Yet that definition isn't the one that counts.

BUSINESS BRIEFS

Amazon to raise Prime fees in Europe, cites rising costs

Amazon is raising its Prime fees in Europe, the company told customers on Tuesday, days ahead of its second-quarter earnings report. Among other places, the price of a monthly Prime membership will tick up in the United Kingdom from 7.99 to 8.99 pounds, while the annual cost will increase from 79 to 95 pounds ($114.26), the company said in the notice sent to customers. In Spain, the monthly price will tick up one euro to 4.99 and the annual cost will go up nearly 14 euros to 49.90 ($50.54). The new charges will take effect on September 15 for those who sign-up for Prime or renew their membership. (AP)

Twitter sets September shareholder vote on Elon Musk buyout

DOVER, Del. (AP)—Twitter has set Sept. 13 as the date for its shareholders to vote on the company's pending buyout by Tesla CEO Elon Musk. The company said in a regulatory filing on Tuesday that it is recommending shareholders vote for the $44 billion deal to be completed. The date is ahead of the yet-to-be specified start date of the October trial in the dispute between the billionaire, who is seeking to abandon the deal, and the San Francisco company. Twitter has sued Musk in Delaware after he said wanted to walk away from the deal. "We are committed to closing the merger on the price and terms agreed upon with Mr. Musk. Your vote at the special meeting is critical to our ability to complete the merger," Twitter said in a letter to its shareholders.

Visa's profits jump 32% as consumers start traveling again

NEW YORK (AP)—Visa Inc. said Tuesday that its fiscal third quarter profits rose 32% from a year earlier, helped by yet another double-digit rise in the amount of money processed on its credit and debit card network. The payment processing company said it earned a profit of $3.4 billion, or $1.60 a share, compared to a profit of $2.57 billion, or $1.18 a share, in the same period a year earlier. Excluding one-time costs, Visa earned $1.98 per share this quarter, which was much better than the $1.75 a share that analysts had been expecting, according to FactSet. San Francisco-based Visa has been benefiting from a worldwide migration from cash to digital forms of payments, either through online shopping or through the increased use of contactless payments. The company processed $2.939 trillion on its network last quarter, up 12% from a year earlier. Visa earns a small fee from every transaction that crosses its network, depending on the type of transaction and the merchant who used it.

Buzz Aldrin flight-to-moon jacket sells at auction for $2.8M

NEW YORK (AP)—Buzz Aldrin's jacket worn on his historic first mission to the moon's surface in 1969 has been auctioned off to a bidder for nearly $2.8 million.

The $2,772,500 paid for the Apollo 11 Inflight Coverall Jacket is the highest for any American space-flown artifact sold at auction, according to Sotheby's, which handled the sale. The unidentified winning bidder, who participated by phone, outlasted several others in a bidding that spanned almost 10 minutes.

The jacket displays Aldrin's name tag on the left breast above the Apollo 11 mission emblem, and the American flag on the left shoulder. It is made of a fire-resistant material known as Beta cloth that was incorporated in spacesuits in response to the fire that killed three astronauts aboard Apollo 1 in 1967, according to Sotheby's.

COURTESY OF SOTHEBY'S VIA AP

This photo provided on Tuesday, July 26, 2022, by Sotheby's, shows a jacket worn by astronaut Edwin "Buzz" Aldrin on the historic first mission to the moon's surface in 1969, which sold for nearly $2.8 million at auction.

Aldrin and Neil Armstrong became the first astronauts to walk on the moon on July 20, 1969.

Nation

Crews make progress against destructive fire near Yosemite

JERSEYDALE, Calif. (AP)—Firefighters continue to make progress against a huge California forest fire that forced evacuations for thousands of people and destroyed 41 homes and other buildings near Yosemite National Park, officials said Tuesday.

Crews battling the Oak Fire in Mariposa County got a break from increased humidity and lower temperatures as monsoonal moisture moved through the Sierra Nevada foothills, said a Tuesday night report by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, or Cal Fire.

After minimal growth Monday and overnight, the blaze had consumed nearly 29 square miles (75 square kilometers) of forest land, with 26% containment on Tuesday, Cal Fire said. The cause was under investigation.

"Although good progress continues on the fire, there is much work to be done," Cal Fire said.

Crews were able to strengthen some areas of fire line although steep, rugged terrain was challenging firefighters on the northern and northeastern sides of the blaze, making it inaccessible to bulldozers and requiring fire lines to be cut by hand, Cal Fire said.

An air tanker drops retardant while trying to stop the Oak Fire from progressing in Mariposa County, Calif., on Sunday, July 24, 2022. AP

Smoke from the blaze also was hampering aircraft, the agency said.

About 6,000 residents from mountain communities were still under evacuation orders, although a few places were downgraded to advisories Tuesday afternoon.

Heavy smoke from the fire drifted more than 200 miles (322 kilometers), reaching Lake Tahoe, parts of Nevada and the San Francisco Bay Area, officials said.

More than 3,000 firefighters supported by two dozen helicopters and 94 bulldozers were battling the blaze that erupted last Friday southwest of the park, near the town of Midpines. It exploded in size on Saturday as flames churned through tinder-dry brush and trees amid the worst drought in decades.

Numerous roads were closed, including a stretch of State Route 140 that's one of the main routes into Yosemite.

California has experienced increasingly larger and deadlier wildfires in recent years as climate change has made the West much warmer and drier over the past 30 years. Scientists have said weather will continue to be more extreme and wildfires more frequent, destructive and unpredictable.

The Oak Fire burned as firefighters also made progress against an earlier blaze that burned to the edge of a grove of giant sequoias in the southernmost part of Yosemite. The Washburn Fire, spanning a 7.6-square-mile (19-square-km) area, was 91% contained on Tuesday after burning for more than two weeks and moving into the Sierra National Forest.

US military making plans in case Pelosi travels to Taiwan

SYDNEY (AP)—U.S. officials say they have little fear that China would attack Nancy Pelosi's plane if she flies to Taiwan. But the U.S. House speaker would be entering one of the world's hottest spots where a mishap, misstep or misunderstanding could endanger her safety. So the Pentagon is developing plans for any contingency.

Officials told The Associated Press that if Pelosi goes to Taiwan—still an uncertainty—the military would increase its movement of forces and assets in the Indo-Pacific region. They declined to provide details, but said that fighter jets, ships, surveillance assets and other military systems would likely be used to provide overlapping rings of protection for her flight to Taiwan and any time on the ground there.

Pelosi

Any foreign travel by a senior U.S. leader requires additional security. But officials said this week that a visit to Taiwan by Pelosi—she would be the highest-ranking U.S. elected official to visit Taiwan since 1997—would go beyond the usual safety precautions for trips to less risky destinations.

Asked about planned military steps to protect Pelosi in the event of a visit, U.S. Gen. Mark Milley, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, said Wednesday that discussion of any specific travel is premature. But, he added, "if there's a decision made that Speaker Pelosi or anyone else is going to travel and they asked for military support, we will do what is necessary to ensure a safe conduct of their visit. And I'll just leave it at that."

Records fall as Northwest swelters under multiday heat wave

PORTLAND, Ore. (AP)—Free transportation to cooling centers and garbage pickup well before sunrise were among the steps being taken in the Pacific Northwest as the region hit the peak of a multiday heatwave.

Temperatures soared to 102 degrees Fahrenheit (38.9 Celsius) in Oregon's largest city on Tuesday, which is expected to be the hottest day of a scorching spell that will be unusually long for this part of the United States. It was also a new daily record for the city for July 26, besting the previous mark set in 2020.

Seattle also reported a new all-time daily high of 94 F (34.4 C), breaking the previous record of 92 F (33.3 C) from 2018, according to the National Weather Service.

Elsewhere in Washington state, record daily temperatures were also registered in Bellingham and the capital, Olympia, which experienced 90 F (32.2 C) and 97 F (36.1 C) respectively.

Oregon Gov. Kate Brown declared a state of emergency across much of the state, warning the extreme temperatures may cause utility outages and transportation disruptions. Temperatures aren't expected to cool in western Oregon and Washington until the weekend.

Under the sweltering heat, Matthew Carr spent his lunch break in a fountain in downtown Portland, Oregon. The 57-year-old works outside picking up trash for the city and had to find a way to cool off.

"This is pretty hot," Carr said. "I can just take my uniform off, jump in there with my shorts for my break, and hang out for a good 10 or 15 minutes."

Oregon health officials say there has been an uptick in the number of people reporting heat-related illness in emergency departments, and the number of those calling emergency services numbers for similar symptoms.

ACROSS THE NATION

Biden, Xi to hold talks amid new tensions over Taiwan

WASHINGTON (AP)—Presidents Joe Biden and Xi Jinping will speak Thursday, according to a U.S. official, their first conversation in four months coming amid new tension between Washington and Beijing over China's claims on Taiwan. The planned talks between the two leaders—the fifth in a series of regular check-ins—have been in the works for weeks. But the possibility of a visit to Taiwan by House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, the top congressional Democrat and second in line of succession to the presidency, has added fresh strain to the complicated relationship. Beijing is warning that it will take "forceful measures" should Pelosi visit the self-ruled island of Taiwan that China claims as part of its territory. The U.S. official declined to be identified ahead of the public announcement. The schedule was first reported by Bloomberg.

2 cops face sentencing for violating George Floyd's rights

ST. PAUL, Minn. (AP)—The last two former Minneapolis police officers to be sentenced for violating George Floyd's civil rights are scheduled to learn their penalties Wednesday, which could set in motion another round of plea deal discussions in state court over a killing that sparked a reckoning on racial injustice. J. Alexander Kueng and Tou Thao were convicted in February of two counts of violating Floyd's civil rights in the 2020 slaying. The jury found they deprived the 46-year-old Black man of medical care and failed to stop Derek Chauvin as he knelt on Floyd's neck for 9 1/2 minutes while Floyd gasped for air. Kueng held Floyd's back, former Officer Thomas Lane held his feet and Thao kept back bystanders, some of whom recorded video that led to worldwide protests. Chauvin, who pleaded guilty last year to violating Floyd's civil rights and the civil rights of a teenager in an unrelated case, was sentenced to 21 years in federal prison. Lane, who twice asked if Floyd should be rolled onto his side so he could breathe, was convicted of one count and was sentenced to 2 1/2.

Seattle to be sanctuary for abortion providers, patients

SEATTLE (AP)—The Seattle City Council voted Tuesday to make the city a sanctuary for abortion providers and patients, meaning Seattle police will not cooperate in arrests or investigations related to abortion bans in other states. The bill, which Councilmember Kshama Sawant introduced at a news conference the day the U.S. Supreme Court repealed decades-old constitutional protections over abortion, deems Seattle a "sanctuary city" for those who seek or provide abortion, The Seattle Times reported. While abortion remains legal across Washington state, the new legislation bars Seattle police from arresting people on warrants issued in other jurisdictions or helping in investigations related to seeking or performing abortions. It follows the model of Seattle's Initiative 75, which similarly stopped the Seattle Police Department from pursuing charges based on cannabis, which remains federally illegal. "Laws violating basic bodily autonomy and criminalizing reproductive health care are fundamentally unjust and we should not allow Seattle to be complicit," Sawant said Tuesday, touting support from 5,500 community members who signed a petition backing the legislation.

Asia

Japan and Indonesia to increase naval security ties as China rises

TOKYO (AP)—The leaders of Japan and Indonesia agreed Wednesday to bolster their ties in maritime security and their cooperation on climate change, energy and investment between the Asian archipelago nations.

Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida, at a joint news conference after holding talks with Indonesian President Joko Widodo in Tokyo, said Japan will provide support to "further reinforce Indonesian maritime security capability to ensure peace and safety at sea in the Indo-Pacific region."

Kishida also announced that Tokyo is loaning 43.6 billion yen ($318 million) to fund Indonesian infrastructure projects and disaster prevention.

Widodo's Japan visit follows his trip to China, where he met with Chinese President Xi Jinping and formally invited him to the Group of 20 summit in Bali in the fall. The two leaders on Tuesday also discussed issues ranging from trade to maritime cooperation.

While Indonesia and China enjoy generally positive ties, Jakarta has expressed concern about Chinese encroachment on its exclusive economic zone in the South China Sea, which China claims virtually in its entirety.

Widodo' comments in Tokyo focused on investment, energy and the G-20 summit. Widodo welcomed new Japanese investments and asked for Japan's support in new technology involving clean energy, infrastructure, medicine, agriculture and natural resources.

"In particular, I invite Japan to support the acceleration of Indonesia's net zero emission target through advocating innovative technologies such as hydrogen and ammonia technology," he said.

Japan is promoting mixing hydrogen and ammonia at coal-fired power plants as a way to lower emissions.

Also, Kishida said Japan is researching whether it can provide Japanese patrol vessels for Indonesia to build its maritime capabilities.

Japan's Ground Self-Defense Force is participating for the first time in the Garuda Shield multilateral training exercise hosted by Indonesia next month, Kishida said. The U.S. is also joining the exercise.

While Japan promotes a "free and open" Indo-Pacific vision of security and trade with the United States and other democracies and friendly nations in the region that share concern about China's increasing assertiveness, the two leaders did not mention the country by name.

Widodo said Indonesia, as the chair of the Association of the Southeast Asian Nations next year and Japan as the chair of the Group of 7 summit, will continue to cooperate for the peace and prosperity in the region and the world.

THE AP INTERVIEW

Japan minister says women 'underestimated'

TOKYO (AP)—Japan's minister for gender equality and children's issues called the country's record low births and plunging population a national crisis and blamed "indifference and ignorance" in the male-dominated Japanese parliament.

In a wide-ranging interview with The Associated Press, Seiko Noda said the steadily dwindling number of children born in Japan was an existential threat, saying the nation won't have enough troops, police or firefighters in coming decades if it continues. The number of newborns last year was a record low 810,000, down from 2.7 million just after the end of World War II, she said.

"People say that children are a national treasure. ... They say that women are important for gender equality. But they are just talking," Noda, 61, told the AP in a Cabinet office in downtown Tokyo's government complex. "The politics of Japan will not move unless (the problems of children and women) are made visible."

She said there are a variety of reasons for the low birthrate, persistent gender bias and population decline in Japan, "but being in the parliament, I especially feel that there is indifference and ignorance."

Japan is the world's third biggest economy, a powerful democracy and a major U.S. ally, but the government has struggled to make society more inclusive for children, women and minorities. There are deep concerns, both within Japan and abroad, about how the country will reverse what critics call a deep-seated history of male chauvinism that has contributed to the low birthrate.

Noda

The gap between men and women in Japan is one of the world's worst. It ranked 116th in a 146-nation survey by the World Economic Forum for 2022, which measured progress toward equality based on economic and political participation, as well as education, health and other opportunities for women.

"Japan has fallen behind because other countries have been changing faster," said Chizuko Ueno, a University of Tokyo professor of feminist studies, referring to Japan's gender gap. "Past governments have neglected the problem."

Because of outdated social and legal systems surrounding family issues, younger Japanese are increasingly reluctant to get married and have children, contributing to the low birthrate and shrinking population, said Noda. She has served in parliament since 1993 and expressed her ambition to be Japan's first female prime minister.

Noda criticized a law requiring married couples to choose one family name — 90% of the time it is the women who change their surnames — saying it's the only such legislation in the world.

"In Japan, women are underestimated in many ways," said Noda, who is one of only two women in the 20-member Cabinet. "I just want women to be on equal footing with men. But we are not there yet, and the further advancement of women still has to wait."

The more powerful lower house of Japan's two-chamber parliament is more than 90% "people who do not menstruate, do not get pregnant and cannot breastfeed," Noda said.

The lack of female representation is often referred to as "democracy without women."

A quota system could help increase the number of female candidates for political office, Noda said. Male lawmakers have criticized her proposal, saying women should be judged by their abilities.

World

New Russian airstrikes target Black Sea regions of Ukraine

A view of apartment buildings destroyed by Russian shelling on the outskirts of Odesa, Ukraine, Tuesday, July 26, 2022. AP

KYIV, Ukraine (AP)—Russia targeted Ukraine's southern Black Sea regions of Odesa and Mykolaiv with airstrikes Tuesday, hitting private buildings and port infrastructure with missiles fired from long-range bomber aircraft, the Ukrainian military said.

In the Odesa region, buildings in coastal villages were hit and caught fire, Ukraine's Operational Command South said on Facebook. A Ukrainian air force spokesman said long-range Russian Tu-22M3 bombers and Su-30 and Su-35 fighter jets launched the strikes from the Black Sea. In the Mykolaiv region, port infrastructure was targeted despite agreements intended to allow grain grain shipments to resume from Ukraine's Black Sea ports.

Hours after the strikes, a Moscow-installed official in southern Ukraine said the Odesa and Mykolaiv regions would soon be "liberated" by Russian forces, just like the already occupied Kherson region further east.

"The Kherson region and the city of Kherson have been liberated forever," Russian state news agency RIA Novosti quoted the region's Russia-appointed official, Kirill Stremousov, as saying.

On the diplomatic front, Russia's foreign minister repeated his insistence that Moscow was ready to hold talks with Ukraine on ending the war, though he again claimed that Kyiv's Western allies oppose a deal.

"We never refused to have talks, because everybody knows that any hostilities end at the negotiating table," Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said Tuesday during a trip to Uganda.

Hundreds of firefighters battle blazes in Germany, Czechia

PRAGUE (AP)—Hundreds of firefighters were battling wildfires in eastern Germany and neighboring Czechia on Tuesday as tourist regions and residential areas were being evacuated.

A large wildfire was spreading quickly in the eastern German state of Brandenburg in a region with lots of bone-dry pine forests where firefighters have to be especially careful because of old World War II ammunition that's still buried there, German news agency dpa reported.

The large fire in the Elbe-Elster district has already destroyed an area of about 850 hectares and continued to spread quickly because of gusty winds blowing from changing directions.

Seven firefighters were injured, four of whom had to be treated in a hospital for smoke inhalation. No residents were injured, but a pig breeding farm burned down and several animals died.

The state's explosive ordnance disposal service has designated a small area near the village of Rehfeld as a site where old ammunition could be buried, deputy forest fire protection officer Philipp Haase told dpa. Two German military firefighting helicopters were on site trying to extinguish the flames from the air because firefighters were not allowed to access the area for fear that the ammunition could explode.

Case of mother burned to death takes new twist in Mexico

MEXICO CITY (AP)—Mexico was outraged when a woman who had reported threats from her neighbors because of her autistic son's loudness was set afire with alcohol and suffered fatal burns this month.

But on Tuesday, prosecutors in the western state of Jalisco suggested the woman had bought medicinal alcohol and a lighter, then set herself alight in a park.

The case of Luz Raquel Padilla comes after a string of brutal killings of women in Mexico that haven't been solved by prosecutors.

Activists had charged that police failed to act on a restraining and protection order obtained by Padilla after the warning "I'm going to burn you alive" was scrawled outside her apartment. Neighbors were reportedly angry over the loud noises her son made.

After her death, police detained a neighbor apparently named in the protection order, but authorities said there was no evidence he was anywhere near where Padilla was burned.

On Tuesday, Luis Mendez Ruiz, head prosecutor in Jalisco, said video footage from security cameras showed Padilla had bought two bottles containing about a quart (liter) of alcohol and a lighter at shops near the park where she was found badly burned July 16. She died later at a hospital.

"The intention isn't ever to re-victimize or criminalize anybody," said Mendez Ruiz. "The person who has been detained has rights as well."

Enviroment

Mideast nations wake up to damage from climate change

By LEE KEATH
ASSOCIATED PRESS

AP

A woman and a boy walk on the dried up riverbed of the Zayandeh Roud river that no longer runs under the 400-year-old Si-o-seh Pol bridge, named for its 33 arches, in Isfahan, Iran on July 10, 2018.

CAIRO (AP)—Temperatures in the Middle East have risen far faster than the world's average in the past three decades. Precipitation has been decreasing, and experts predict droughts will come with greater frequency and severity.

The Middle East is one of the most vulnerable regions in the world to the impact of climate change—and already the effects are being seen.

In Iraq, intensified sandstorms have repeatedly smothered cities this year, shutting down commerce and sending thousands to hospitals. Rising soil salinity in Egypt's Nile Delta is eating away at crucial farmland. In Afghanistan, drought has helped fuel the migration of young people from their villages, searching for jobs. In recent weeks, temperatures in some parts of the region have topped 50 degrees Celsius (122 Fahrenheit).

This year's annual U.N. climate change conference, known as COP27, is being held in Egypt in November, throwing a spotlight on the region. Governments across the Middle East have awakened to the dangers of climate change, particularly to the damage it is already inflicting on their economies.

"We're literally seeing the effects right in front of us. ... These impacts are not something that will hit us nine or 10 years down the line," said Lama El Hatow, an environmental climate change consultant who has worked with the World Bank and specializes on the Middle East and North Africa.

"More and more states are starting to understand that it's necessary" to act, she said.

Egypt, Morocco and other countries in the region have been stepping up initiatives for clean energy. But a top priority for them at COP-27 is to push for more international funding to help them deal with the dangers they are already facing from climate change.

One reason for the Middle East's vulnerability is that there is simply no margin to cushion the blow on millions of people as the rise in temperatures accelerates: The region already has high temperatures and limited water resources even in normal circumstances.

Middle East governments also have a limited ability to adapt, the International Monetary Fund noted in a report earlier this year. Economies and infrastructure are weak, and regulations are often unenforced. Poverty is widespread, making job creation a priority over climate protection. Autocratic governments like Egypt's severely restrict civil society, hampering an important tool in engaging the public on environmental and climate issues.

At the same time, developing nations are pressuring countries in the Mideast and elsewhere to make emissions cuts, even as they themselves backslide on promises.

The threats are dire.

As the region grows hotter and drier, the United Nations has warned that the Mideast's crop production could drop 30% by 2025. The region is expected to lose 6%-14% of its GDP by 2050 because of water scarcity, according to the World Bank.

In Egypt, precipitation has fallen 22% in the past 30 years, according to the World Bank.

Droughts are expected to become more frequent and severe. The Eastern Mediterranean recently saw its worst drought in 900 years, according to NASA, a heavy blow to countries like Syria and Lebanon where agriculture relies on rainfall. Demand for water in Jordan and the Persian Gulf countries is putting unsustainable pressure on underground water aquifers. In Iraq, the increased aridity has caused an increase in sandstorms.

At the same time, warming waters and air make extreme and often destructive weather events more frequent, like deadly floods that have repeatedly hit Sudan and Afghanistan.

The climate damage has potentially dangerous social repercussions.

Many of those who lose the livelihoods they once made in agriculture or tourism will move to the cities in search of jobs, said Karim Elgendy, an associate fellow at Chatham House. That will likely increase urban unemployment, strain social services and could raise social tensions and affect security, said Elgendy, who is also a nonresident scholar with the Middle East Institute.

Adapting infrastructure and economies to weather the damage will be enormously expensive: the equivalent of 3.3% of the region's GDP every year for the next 10 years, the IMF estimates. The spending needs to go toward everything from creating more efficient water use systems and new agricultural methods to building coastal protections, beefing up social safety nets and improving awareness campaigns.

So one of top priorities for Mideast and other developing nations at this year's COP is to press the United States, Europe and other wealthier nations to follow through on long-time promises to provide them with billions in climate financing.

So far, developed nations have fallen short on those promises. Also, most of the money they have provided has gone to helping poorer countries pay for reducing greenhouse gas emissions—for "mitigation," in U.N. terminology, as opposed to "adaptation."

For this year's COP, the top theme repeated by U.N. officials, the Egyptian hosts and climate activists is the implementation of commitments. The gathering aims to push countries to spell out how they will reach promised emission reduction targets—and to come up with even deeper cuts, since experts say the targets as they are now will still lead to disastrous levels of warming.

US to plant 1 billion trees as climate change kills forests

By MATTHEW BROWN
ASSOCIATED PRESS

BILLINGS, Mont. (AP)—The Biden administration on Monday said the government will plant more than one billion trees across millions of acres of burned and dead woodlands in the U.S. West, as officials struggle to counter the increasing toll on the nation's forests from wildfires, insects and other manifestations of climate change.

Destructive fires in recent years that burned too hot for forests to regrow naturally have far outpaced the government's capacity to plant new trees. That has created a backlog of 4.1 million acres (1.7 million hectares) in need of replanting, officials said.

The U.S. Agriculture Department said it will have to quadruple the number of tree seedlings produced by nurseries to get through the backlog and meet future needs. That comes after Congress last year passed bipartisan legislation directing the Forest Service to plant 1.2 billion trees over the next decade and after President Joe Biden in April ordered the agency to make the nation's forests more resilient as the globe gets hotter.

Much of the administration's broader agenda to tackle climate change remains stalled amid disagreement in Congress, where Democrats hold a razor-thin majority. That has left officials to pursue a more piecemeal approach with incremental measures such as Monday's announcement, while the administration considers whether to declare a climate emergency that could open the door to more aggressive executive branch actions.

To erase the backlog of decimated forest acreage, the Forest Service plans over the next couple years to scale up work from about 60,000 acres (24,000 hectares) replanted last year to about 400,000 acres (162,000 hectares) annually, officials said. Most of the work will be in western states where wildfires now occur year round and the need is most pressing, said David Lytle, the agency's director of forest management.

Blazes have charred 5.6 million acres so far in the U.S. this year, putting 2022 on track to match or exceed the record-setting 2015 fire season, when 10.1 million acres (4.1 million hectares) burned.

Many forests regenerate naturally after fires, but if the blazes get too intense they can leave behind barren landscapes that linger for decades before trees come back.

"Our forests, rural communities, agriculture and economy are connected across a shared landscape and their existence is at stake," Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack said in a statement announcing the reforestation plan. "Only through bold, climate-smart actions ... can we ensure their future."

The Forest Service this year is spending more than $100 million on reforestation work. Spending is expected to further increase in coming years, to as much as $260 million annually, under the sweeping federal infrastructure bill approved last year, agency officials said.

Some timber industry supporters were critical of last year's reforesting legislation as insufficient to turn the tide on the scale of the wildfire problem. They want more aggressive logging to thin stands that have become overgrown from years of suppressing fires.

To prevent replanted areas from becoming similarly overgrown, practices are changing so reforested stands are less dense with trees and therefore less fire prone, said Joe Fargione, science director for North America at the Nature Conservancy.

But challenges to the Forest Service's goal remain, from finding enough seeds to hiring enough workers to plant them, Fargione said.

Many seedlings will die before reaching maturity due to drought and insects, both of which can be exacerbated by climate change.

"You've got to be smart about where you plant," Fargione said. "There are some places that the climate has already changed enough that it makes the probability of successfully reestablishing trees pretty low."

Living trees are a major "sink" for carbon dioxide that's driving climate change when it enters the atmosphere, Fargione said. That means replacing those that die is important to keep climate change from getting even worse.

Life & Style

Harry Styles secures first Mercury Prize nomination

LONDON (AP)—Harry Styles has secured his first Mercury Prize nomination with his third solo album, competing for the British music award with acts like singer-songwriter Sam Fender and rapper Little Simz.

Styles was shortlisted Tuesday for his album "Harry's House," which has topped U.K. album charts for six weeks—longer than all of the albums he recorded as a member of the boy band One Direction combined.

Styles

The 12 albums shortlisted for this year's Mercury Prize, which recognizes the best British or Irish album of the year, include Fender's "Seventeen Going Under" and Little Simz's "Sometimes I Might Be Introvert."

Actress Jessie Buckley, who recently won an Olivier Award for best actress in a musical for her role as Sally Bowles in "Cabaret," also made the list for "For All Our Days That Tear The Heart," her album with former Suede guitarist Bernard Butler.

A judging panel that included musicians Jamie Cullum and Anna Calvi narrowed the nominations down for the short list.

The panel said the albums covered "everything from imaginative pop to pioneering rap to Cornish language folk-rock."

The awards show is set to take place on Sept. 8 in London with live performances from many of the shortlisted acts.

Cyndi Lauper says 'Kinky Boots' offers hope for a new time

NEW YORK (AP)—Three years after it closed on Broadway, the musical "Kinky Boots" returns to New York City. The show may not have changed, but the country has.

Lauper

The Cyndi Lauper- and Harvey Fierstein-created musical landed on Broadway in 2013 in the middle of the Obama administration, a big hug of acceptance, tolerance and love. It reappears off-Broadway now at Stage 42 as same-sex gains and privacy rights seem under threat.

The Tony- and Olivier-winning musical is about a staid British shoe factory on the brink of ruin that retrofits itself into a maker of footwear for drag queens and embraces its queerness.

Lauper, whose hits include "Girls Just Want to Have Fun" and "Time After Time," has long been an advocate for the LGBTQ community, starting the nonprofit advocacy organization that would become True Colors United in 2008. She also backs abortion rights and just reworked her 1993 song "Sally's Pigeons," which she wrote about a friend who died from a botched abortion.

The Associated Press asked her about the return of "Kinky Boots," so-called cancel culture and the role of artists now that rights are being rolled back. Responses have been edited for brevity and clarity.

AP: What were your thoughts about bringing "Kinky Boots" back to New York?

LAUPER: I wasn't keen on putting it off-Broadway, but when everyone explained how they felt and what they missed and what was going on, I understood that it's just a place where people could watch a show where not just one person evolves, but everyone evolves.

AP: It does offer a big wet kiss to theatergoers.

LAUPER: I just think it's a wonderful experience and it's inclusive. And, to me, that makes everything a little richer. You know, I never even liked one kind of music. I like music that's exposed to everything. Like cooking. I don't have a bland palate.

AP: Has it stood up?

LAUPER: I could go in there in a bad mood and it just makes me feel better. And I start laughing. It's just good. It has redemption. It's a story that has redemption. And that's the most important thing. You need to give people hope. You can't take people's hope away.

AP: "Kinky Boots" is all about acceptance and reaching out. Do you worry about the tone of the country now that many seem to be opposed to that sentiment?

LAUPER: Who died and left them in charge of everything? Well, I'll tell you: If you didn't vote, you left them in charge. As soon as you didn't vote, they're in charge. They're changing the laws.

AP: Why did you release a new version of "Sally's Pigeons"?

LAUPER: Because I think that we have forgotten what it was like when "Sally's Pigeons" was a common story. Not a lot of people remember that because they didn't live that.

R. Kelly manager pleads guilty to stalking

NEW YORK (AP)—A self-described manager and adviser to R. Kelly pleaded guilty Tuesday to an interstate stalking charge, less than a week after he was convicted of making a phone threat that gunfire was about to occur in a Manhattan theater where a documentary about the singer was about to be shown.

Russell

Donnell Russell, 47, of Chicago, entered the plea in Brooklyn federal court.

U.S. Attorney Breon Peace said Russell used threats, harassment and intimidation to silence one of Kelly's sexual abuse victims. Kelly, who was sentenced to 30 years in prison last month, was convicted last year of racketeering and sex trafficking.

Peace said in a statement that Russell sent threatening messages to the woman and her mother and later published explicit photos of the victim on the internet.

Russell could face up to five years in prison at a Nov. 17 sentencing.

Prosecutors said the harassment campaign stretched from November 2018 to February 2020 after the woman filed a civil lawsuit against Kelly.

Last Friday, a Manhattan federal court jury found Russell guilty of threatening physical harm through interstate communication.

The jury concluded that Russell made a phone threat that forced the evacuation of a theater where Lifetime's "Surviving R. Kelly" series was to be shown, and a panel discussion was to occur featuring several women in the documentary.

Prosecutors argued during the one-week trial that Russell was trying to protect the lucrative career of Kelly, a Grammy-winning, multi-platinum-selling songwriter.

A trial witness had testified that a man with a deep voice had called the theater to warn that "someone had a gun and they were going to shoot up the place." Prosecutors said the call was placed to the theater from Russell's home on a day when Russell made nine phone calls to the theater to try to stop the airing of the documentary.

New Mexico foundation to return Indigenous items to Mexico

Small, ancient sculptures that have been gathering dust in an Albuquerque storage box are returning home to Mexico, where they are intertwined with the identity of Indigenous communities.

The Albuquerque Museum Foundation is celebrating the repatriation of the dozen sculptures in a ceremony Wednesday. The local Consulate of Mexico will accept Olmec greenstone sculptures, a figure from the city of Zacatecas, bowls that were buried with tombs and other clay figurines that date back thousands of years.

The event comes as Native, Indigenous and African communities have pushed for museums, universities and other institutions to repatriate items that are important parts of their cultures and histories.

Foundation President and CEO Andrew Rodgers said returning the sculpture that have sat in storage for 15 years was the right thing to do. Even the foundation's board agreed. But some outside their organization had a different idea.

Boyfriend's plans for future are subject to mom's approval

DEAR ABBY: My adult granddaughter, "Lola," is in a two-year relationship with a wonderful young man and has been anticipating a proposal. During a conversation, he mentioned he would not propose to her until he has introduced her to his parents, who live in another state.

He says his mother wants him to marry a woman who has never been married or divorced and who has not had a child. Lola is divorced (due to her ex-husband's infidelity) and has a young son. This seems to her to be a no-win situation if he won't propose until she's met his parents, but he lacks the courage to introduce her to them. What is my granddaughter to do? She's so unhappy and disappointed.

IMPOSSIBLE IN TEXAS

DEAR IMPOSSIBLE: Your granddaughter's boyfriend is a mama's boy. The decision of whom to marry should be his, not his mother's. If, after two years, he cannot summon up the courage to introduce her PROUDLY to his parents, she should quit wasting her time with him because this romance will go no further than it already has.

■■■■

DEAR ABBY: I cannot seem to get over the loss of my first husband decades ago. I still think of him often. I am still grieving our divorce and his subsequent marriage to someone I'd known for many years. They have happily gone on with their lives.

I am a widow now. My second husband was like me, dumped by his first wife, and we cobbled a life together as best we could. My problem is that I can't stop longing for my first husband. Logically, I know we'll never be together, even if he were free from his marriage to the "other woman."

How does one ever get beyond the grief from a marriage that made me feel happy, safe and loved? Do others suffer for decades? I can't seem to move past the sadness, but would like to be free of these feelings before I pass away.

MISSING THAT LIFE

DEAR MISSING: You are stuck in a rut of your own making, grieving the loss of your first marriage because there's nothing else going on in your life to distract you. If you want to get beyond this, start finding other things to occupy your time and your thoughts. Explore special interest groups you can join and activities that will take you out into the community so you have less time alone to brood. And if that isn't enough, consider asking your doctor to refer you to a licensed mental health professional.

■■■■

DEAR ABBY: The past couple of years I've given $300 to $400 in cash to my personal trainer and his therapist wife for their birthdays and Christmas. When I hand them the card, they'll thank me for the card, but I never hear another word. How do I know they just didn't throw away an unopened card? Maybe I've insulted them with the cash? Or someone pilfered it? Or is this a sign of the times?

BITTER IN THE WEST

DEAR BITTER: The next time you hand them their cards, say, "I hope you can use what's inside to get yourself something nice or have some fun." (If you still want to continue giving them money, that is!)

■■■■

Good advice for everyone – teens to seniors – is in "The Anger in All of Us and How to Deal With It." To order, send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for $8 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby, Anger Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)

DEAR ABBY

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

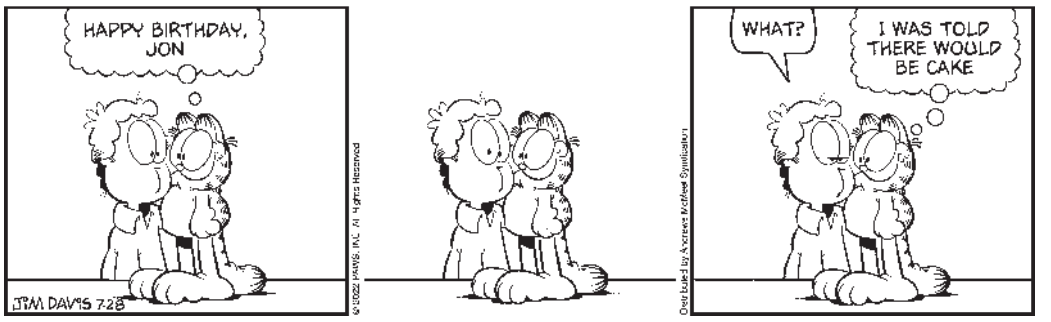
Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson

Garfield®

By Jim Davis



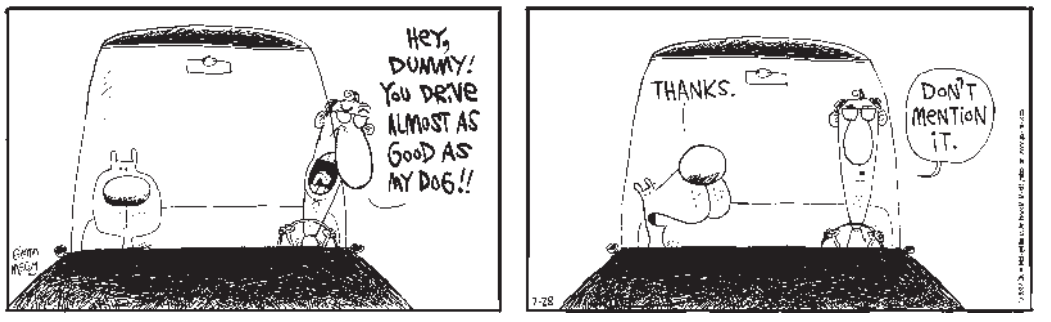
Adam@home

By Bryan Basset

WHAT'S YOUR DAD DOING?
BUILDING HIS YARD ART.
SIGH.
THE GARRETTS SCULPTURE IS AWFUL, BUT HE MAY BE TAKING THIS TOO FAR.
HOW FAR ALONG IS HE?
THE 20-FOOT FOUND ART CHIMPANZEE IS UP, BUT THE 'LIGHTSHOW OF DOOM' ISN'T FUNCTIONAL YET.
7-28

The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy



CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS

1 Story lines
5 Entanglement
8 Victor's cry
12 Barking mammal
13 Artist Yoko
14 Scrapped mission
15 Hawaiian city
16 Tic-tac-toe win
17 Corrida bull
18 Surround
20 Edge
22 Standard
23 Fiddle stick
24 Umps
27 Revolt
32 — Baba
33 To and —
34 Modern, in Bonn
35 They can hold their heads high
38 Aussie greeting
39 Takeoff stat
40 Comic Philips
42 On the job
45 Destroys
49 Hoodlum
50 Privy
52 Small combo
53 Oklahoma tribe
54 GI entertainers
55 Full house, e.g.
56 Pantheon members
57 Club —
58 Early birds?

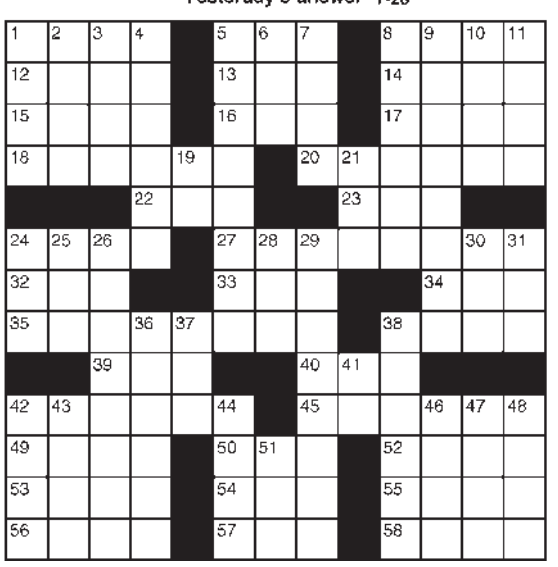
DOWN

1 Tennis legend Arthur
2 Check
3 Young whale
4 Sailing vessels
5 PBS anchor Judy
6 Rock's Brian
7 Nitwit
8 Preambles
9 Oboe, for one
10 Folklore monster
11 Queen dowager of Jordan
19 "— Bohème"
21 Kimono closer
24 Tatter
25 Yalie
26 Kindling
28 Opposite of "post-"
29 Guitar-making material
30 PBS supporter
31 Chap
36 Makes amends
37 New Deal pres.
38 "Faust" dramatist
41 "— Deeds"
42 Awe-struck
43 Dorothy's dog
44 Heidi of "Project Runway"
46 Rocky outcrop
47 Monarch
48 Freshens lawns
51 Sugar suffix

Solution time: 24 mins.

P	E	R	K		B	A	H		C	R	A	G
A	L	A			E	G	O		L	A	C	E
R	A	N	G	E	T	O	P		A	N	A	T
A	I	T	A	R			S	A	U	N	I	S
			L	G	B	T		U	S	O		
S	A	R			R	A	I	D		M	M	M
U	M	A		C	E	L	L	I		L	E	E
B	A	N		J	T	I	L		C	Y	A	N
		C	O	B		A	S	E	A			
S	C	H	L	E	P			E	L	L	I	S
C	P	E	D		H	A	N	K	L	I	N	G
M	A	R	E		E	M	U		E	D	I	T
A	S	S	N		P	I	T		D	O	T	S

Yesterday's answer 7-28



STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call **1-900-226-5955**! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Dustin Milligan, 37; Sally Struthers, 75; Jim Davis, 77; Peter Cullen, 81.

Happy Birthday: Be open about how you feel and what you intend to do this year. The dialogue you choose will help set the tone for how you live and the goals you create. Choose your words wisely, and you'll find a way to convince others to tag along. Your discipline and determination will set the stage for what's to come. Your numbers are 5, 17, 21, 23, 32, 37, 45.

ARIES *(March 21-April 19):* Don't overdo it or put your emotions on display. Use intelligence to figure out how to do your best and get the most in return. Distance yourself from those who want to argue or put you in an awkward position. ✪✪

TAURUS *(April 20-May 20):* Confusion will occur if someone says one thing and does another. Listen carefully and discover how to use the information you receive in a fashion that helps you without hurting someone. Document every move. ✪✪✪✪

GEMINI *(May 21-June 20):* Use your connections to get ahead. Don't limit what you can do because you are afraid of rejection. Step up and rearrange your schedule to ensure you can take advantage of whatever comes your way. Orchestrate your next move. ✪✪✪

CANCER *(June 21-July 22):* Take advantage of an opportunity someone brings to your attention. Find out all you can, then up your game in preparation. Added skills and experience will help you outmaneuver anyone who wants to compete with you. Personal growth is encouraged. ✪✪✪

LEO *(July 23-Aug. 22):* You'll be able to get on with your life and follow your heart once you share your feelings. Arguments can evolve only if you choose to engage. Looking at the big picture will make it easy to recognize what's best for you. ✪✪✪

VIRGO *(Aug. 23-Sept. 22):* You may crave something new, but before you initiate change, consider the outcome. Don't bite off more than you can chew. Test the waters, do your research and take one step at a time to ensure safety. Patience will pay off. ✪✪✪

LIBRA *(Sept. 23-Oct. 22):* Reach out to people you can count on for support, good advice and hands-on help. Listen to your body and incorporate a health regimen that helps you lower your risk of disease. An open conversation will assist in resolving pending problems.✪✪✪✪

SCORPIO *(Oct. 23-Nov. 21):* You'll need plenty of stamina and discipline to deal with unexpected or last-minute changes. Welcome a challenge, and apply unique techniques and plans to overcome any obstacle that gets in your way. A personal improvement is featured. ✪✪

SAGITTARIUS *(Nov. 22-Dec. 21):* Put your plans in motion. Limit spending and invest wisely. Handle situations at home carefully. Don't give others jurisdiction over the lifestyle you live. Satisfy your needs first, and incorporate outside influences as you see fit. Financial gain is favored. ✪✪✪✪✪

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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CAPRICORN *(Dec. 22-Jan. 19):* Change begins with you. Size up your situation and rethink the way you want to live. Don't limit what you can do because of cost. Size down or adjust your overhead to fit your plans. Be the one to initiate change. 3 stars

AQUARIUS *(Jan. 20-Feb. 18)*: Stop worrying about what others do; concentrate on what you want. Discipline and hard work will help you reach your goals and eliminate what's no longer working for you. Keep the peace, but don't fold under pressure. Walk away from bullies. ✪✪✪

PISCES *(Feb. 19-March 20):* Things won't go according to plan when dealing with pending financial, legal or health issues. Have a backup plan to ensure you come out ahead. A social or networking event will give you a platform to strut your stuff. Don't overdo it.✪✪✪ **Birthday Baby:** You are entertaining, expressive and wise. You are helpful and sensitive.

✪: Avoid conflicts; work behind the scenes. ✪✪: You can accomplish, but don't rely on others. ✪✪✪: Focus and you'll reach your goals. ✪✪✪✪: Aim high; start new projects. ✪✪✪✪✪: Nothing can stop you; go for gold.

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku *By Dave Green*

	8			9			6	
3		1				2		5
		9	8		6	4		
1				7				3
		8	9		4	1		
9		4				3		7
	2			6			8	

Difficulty Level ★★★ 7/28

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's Answer

5	3	9	1	6	4	2	7	8
2	4	6	7	8	9	5	1	3
1	7	8	3	5	2	6	9	4
3	8	5	2	9	1	4	6	7
9	1	4	6	7	5	8	3	2
7	6	2	8	4	3	1	5	9
8	5	1	4	3	7	9	2	6
4	9	7	5	2	6	3	8	1
6	2	3	9	1	8	7	4	5

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WONDERWORD

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them, circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the **WONDERWORD.**

NIBS Solution: 13 letters

P	N	I	C	A	I	N	L	O	W	F	A	T	V	L
U	I	D	N	U	O	R	G	R	E	G	N	I	G	I
R	F	E	I	H	T	O	O	M	S	D	N	F	B	O
Y	F	Y	R	R	E	H	C	N	I	T	C	N	A	M
S	U	O	E	N	N	O	A	C	A	C	F	O	K	L
N	M	R	C	I	E	C	A	G	C	B	O	C	E	A
R	O	O	Y	B	K	C	E	M	T	A	A	C	D	P
O	R	V	L	B	I	S	U	W	T	L	I	G	O	L
C	S	A	G	L	W	I	I	M	O	T	B	T	S	A
A	E	L	O	E	S	Z	E	R	H	R	R	Ⓟ	T	N
N	L	F	E	S	Z	A	I	I	I	C	Ⓐ	O	I	T
D	S	T	A	L	L	E	N	N	E	Ⓒ	N	G	B	L
Y	E	T	E	T	S	A	O	R	Ⓚ	R	D	U	U	A
S	O	R	B	A	T	E	X	T	R	A	C	T	M	S
P	S	D	A	E	R	B	I	T	E	S	I	Z	E	Y

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Bags, Baked, Bite-size, Bits, Brand, Breads, Cacao, Calories, Candy, Cherry, Cocoa, Confit, Corn Syrup, Extract, Flavor, Folic Acid, Ginger, Glycerin, Ground, Lecithin, Low-fat, Morsels, Muffin, Munch, Niacin, Nibbles, Oatmeal, Pack, Palm Oil, Plant, Potassium, Red, Roast, Salt, Smoothie, Snack, Sorbate, Sugar, Sweet, Twizzlers, Vintage

Yesterday's Answer: Eye Shadow

The NEW **Treasury 49** can be purchased online at www.WonderWordBooks.com, or call 1-800-642-6480.

Springer hits slam, Jays win 7th in row, top depleted Cards

TORONTO (AP) — George Springer hit his seventh career grand slam, Vladimir Guerrero Jr. had a two-run drive and the Toronto Blue Jays extended their winning streak to seven by beating the short-handed St. Louis Cardinals 10-3 Tuesday night.

Alejandro Kirk added his 12th homer and Matt Chapman had two hits, including the tiebreaking single in a five-run sixth as Toronto improved to 8-1 under manager John Schneider.

Dylan Carlson hit a solo home run as St. Louis played the first of two games in Canada without unvaccinated sluggers Paul Goldschmidt and Nolan Arenado. The two biggest bats in the Cardinals lineup were placed on the restricted list before the game, along with catcher Austin Romine.

Foreign nationals who aren't vaccinated against COVID-19 are not allowed to enter Canada, save for limited exceptions that require a 14-day quarantine. Unvaccinated baseball players are placed on the restricted list, where they are not paid and do not accrue major league service time.

Tim Mayza (5-0) got one out for the win. Jordan Hicks (2-5) was charged with the loss.

Mets 6, Yankees 3

In New York, Eduardo Escobar hit a two-run homer that capped a four-run first inning, and the Mets beat the Yankees in a rare Subway Series matchup of first-place teams.

Yankees sluggers Aaron Judge and Anthony Rizzo quieted many of the 42,364 fans at Citi Field with opposite-field home runs on consecutive pitches by Taijuan Walker (8-2) in the first.

But the Mets stormed right back in the bottom half when Starling Marte homered with one out against Jordan Montgomery (3-3). Francisco Lindor and Pete Alonso followed with back-to-back doubles, and Escobar's two-out homer put the Mets ahead.

Nationals 8, Dodgers 3

In Los Angeles, Luis Garcia hit a two-run homer in the eighth inning and last-place Washington rallied past Los Angeles for its second straight win against the NL West leaders.

Garcia's shot into the right-field seats with two outs against Los Angeles left-hander Garrett Cleavinger (0-1) was his third home run of the season and brought home Josh Bell, who reached first on a throwing error by Dodgers second baseman Gavin Lux.

Mookie Betts hit his team-leading 23rd home run and threw out a runner at home plate for the Dodgers. Cody Bellinger also went deep, and Freddie Freeman added an RBI on a sacrifice fly as all three Dodgers runs came from former MVPs.

Guardians 8, Red Sox 3

In Boston, Nolan Jones hit a three-run homer, fellow rookie Steven Kwan had three hits and Cleveland dampened Boston's celebration for newly minted Hall of Famer David Ortiz.

Minutes after the Cooperstown inductee proclaimed himself a good luck charm for his slumping former team, the Red Sox fell behind 5-0 on their way to a sixth loss in seven games. They have lost 14 of their last 18 to fall into last place in the AL East.

Austin Hedges also homered for Cleveland, which snapped a three-game losing streak. Kirk McCarty (1-2) earned his first career victory, pitching four scoreless innings.

Angels 6, Royals 0

In Kansas City, Mo., Shohei Ohtani and Max Stassi hit towering homers for the Angels, and Luis Rengifo added a bases-loaded double to break open a close game in the seventh inning.

Jose Suarez (2-4) scattered three hits and a walk over 5 1/3 innings before the Los Angeles bullpen, which was hammered by Kansas City in a series-opening loss, rolled through the same bunch to clinch the Angels' first win since July 13.

They also kept Kansas City from winning four consecutive games for the first time this season.

Mariners 5, Rangers 4

In Seattle, Cal Raleigh homered in the seventh inning, lined an RBI double in the ninth and scored the winning run on Carlos Santana's sacrifice fly, and Seattle rallied past Texas.

J.P. Crawford led off the ninth with a single off Texas reliever Brett Martin and scored from first when Raleigh lined a shot to the wall in right-center field. Raleigh was sacrificed to third base, and after Martin (0-6) issued intentional walks to Julio Rodríguez and Ty France to load the bases, Santana hit a fly ball to center field that was deep enough for Raleigh to score the winning run.

Rodríguez led off the game with his 17th home run of the season in his first action since the All-Star Game, sidelined by a sore left wrist.

AP

Toronto Blue Jays' George Springer (4) celebrates with Matt Chapman (26) after hitting a grand slam during the sixth inning of a baseball game against the St. Louis Cardinals, Tuesday, July 26, 2022 in Toronto.

Braves 6, Phillies 3

In Philadelphia, Michael Harris II and Matt Olson homered, leading Atlanta to the victory.

Dansby Swanson added three hits and Spencer Strider was sharp over six innings as Atlanta remained the only team in baseball without a three-game losing streak this season. Austin Riley stretched his hitting streak to 18 games.

Strider (5-3) allowed three hits and a run as Atlanta improved to 36-13 since June 1. Manager Brian Snitker earned his 500th victory, all with the Braves.

Kyle Schwarber's NL-leading 31st homer in the sixth got the Phillies on the board, and J.T. Realmuto hit a two-run homer off Will Smith in the ninth. Kenley Jansen came on and got two outs for his 23rd save.

Orioles 5, Rays 3

In Baltimore, Baltimore's Ramón Urías hit a two-run homer in the eighth inning off Colin Poche to undo a marvelous start by Tampa Bay All-Star Shane McClanahan.

McClanahan pitched seven innings of two-hit ball and was lifted with a 3-2 lead after throwing 81 pitches on a humid night. Poche (2-1) promptly gave up a leadoff single to Adley Rutschman and Urías followed by driving an 0-2 pitch over the left-field wall.

Trey Mancini capped the rally with a sacrifice fly for the surprising Orioles, who moved one game over .500 (49-48) after finishing 52-110 last year.

Keegan Akin (2-1) got the last out in the eighth and All-Star reliever Jorge López worked the ninth for his 19th save.

Isaac Paredes homered for the Rays, who have lost four straight.

Brewers 7, Twins 6

In Milwaukee, Milwaukee's Luis Urías delivered a game-ending sacrifice fly in the ninth inning.

Andrew McCutchen started the winning rally with a one-out single off Tyler Duffey (2-4), who then walked Kolten Wong and Hunter Renfroe to load the bases. Urías followed with a fly ball, and McCutchen slid home well ahead of right fielder Alex Kirilloff's throw.

Urías homered earlier in the game and Renfroe and Wong also went deep. Renfroe has homered in four of the Brewers' five games since the All-Star break.

Gio Urshela hit a three-run homer and Byron Buxton added a solo shot for the Twins.

Milwaukee's Josh Hader (1-4) got the win.

White Sox 2, Rockies 1

In Denver, Michael Kopech pitched shutout ball into the sixth inning, sending the White Sox to the victory.

Yasmani Grandal had three hits in Chicago's third straight win. Yoán Moncada doubled home Adam Engel in the seventh.

All-Star closer Liam Hendriks worked a rocky ninth for his 19th save, surrendering Ryan McMahon's leadoff homer. Pinch-hitter Elias Díaz walked with two out, but Hendriks got Charlie Blackmon to bounce to shortstop.

Colorado wasted a stellar performance by Germán Márquez (6-8), who permitted one run and seven hits in six innings.

Kopech (4-6) departed after allowing six hits in 5 1/3 innings.

Athletics 5, Astros 3

In Oakland, Calif., Chad Pinder hit his second grand slam in two weeks, and Frankie Montas pitched five innings in what could be his final outing with Oakland.

Tony Kemp had an RBI double and Stephen Piscotty doubled twice for the A's. Oakland has won five of six.

Montas (4-9) allowed three runs, two earned, to win for the first time since June 11. The right-hander has been the subject of trade rumors.

Lou Trivino pitched the ninth for his 10th save.

Kyle Tucker hit his 19th home run for the Astros. Luis García (8-6) allowed four runs in 5 2/3 innings.

Padres 6, Tigers 4, 10 innings

In Detroit, Jorge Alfaro capped San Diego's three-run 10th inning with a two-run single.

Luke Voit finished with three RBIs for San Diego after he was hit by a bases-loaded pitch from All-Star Gregory Soto (2-5) in the 10th. After Matthew Batten struck out swinging for the second out, Alfaro drove in Jake Cronenworth and Manny Machado with a single to right.

Cronenworth was hit by a pitch leading off the inning, and Machado reached on shortstop Javier Báez's throwing error.

Detroit got one back on Jeimer Candelario's RBI double in the bottom half. But Nick Martinez retired Willi Castro on a fly ball to center, earning his fourth save.

Alfaro also drove in three runs. Taylor Rogers (1-4) got the win.

Cubs 4, Pirates 2

In Chicago, Willson Contreras drew a standing ovation in perhaps his last home game at Wrigley Field, and then keyed an early burst as the Cubs earned their season-high sixth straight win.

Contreras tipped his cap after being cheered at the plate his first time up. The All-Star catcher hit a soft single to center field in a three-run first inning off Bryse Wilson (1-6).

Contreras, who can become a free agent after this season, could be on the move ahead of the Aug. 2 trade deadline.

Seiya Suzuki homered for Chicago, and Keegan Thompson (8-4) pitched seven effective innings. Mychal Givens worked the ninth for his second save.

Rookie shortstop Oneil Cruz hit a two-run homer for Pittsburgh, which has dropped four of five.

Diamondbacks 7, Giants 3

In Phoenix, Christian Walker hit a three-run homer off a frustrated Carlos Rodón, and the Diamondbacks handed the Giants their sixth straight loss.

The Diamondbacks (44-53) won for the fifth time in eight games against the Giants this season after winning just twice in 19 meetings last year.

San Francisco (48-49), which won 107 games a year ago, fell below .500 for the first time this season.

Walker's 23rd homer broke a 2-2 tie in the third against Rodón (8-6), who only gave up three hits in six innings.

Ian Kennedy (4-4) retired all five batters he faced to pick up the victory.

Marlins 2, Reds 1

In Cincinnati, Pablo López tied his career high with 11 strikeouts over seven dominant innings, leading Miami to the victory.

Joey Wendle hit a two-run single off Hunter Greene as Miami won for the third time in nine games.

A day after Cincinnati piled up 11 runs in a romp, López (7-5) turned in a stopper-like performance for the Marlins. The right-hander allowed one run and two hits, retiring 21 of his last 22 batters.

Tanner Scott closed it out with a 1-2-3 ninth for his 13th save.

Mike Moustakas homered for the Reds, who had won nine of their previous 13 games. Greene (3-12) allowed nine hits in 6 1/3 innings.

Cardinals say QB Kyler Murray focused on football

Arizona Cardinals quarterback Kyler Murray addresses the media, Friday, July 22, 2022, in Tempe, Ariz. AP

LITCHFIELD PARK, Ariz. (AP)—Kyler Murray has made it no secret he enjoys video games, including the popular "Call of Duty" franchise.

Tight end Zach Ertz said the franchise quarterback also knows he has a duty to study his playbook.

Ertz believes Murray's love of video games and football can be balanced, no matter what unique addendums are in Murray's new $230.5 million contract that could keep him in the desert through the 2028 season.

"Kyler knows the playbook better than anyone on this team," Ertz said Tuesday, when the Cardinals reported for preseason camp. "He's been in the system a long period of time. Ultimately, I'm happy he signed a deal that he's happy about.

"I wasn't there for the process, that's way above my pay grade, but it seems like he's in a really good place mentally."

Murray finalized his five-year deal last week but it received renewed attention on Monday, when NFL Network first reported that Murray's new contract included an "independent study" clause.

It says the quarterback must study at least four hours each week during the season for Arizona's upcoming game and that he can't be distracted by "watching television, playing video games or browsing the internet."

Fourth-year coach Kliff Kingsbury made it sound like the study addendum wasn't his idea. He's just glad the quarterback will remain in a Cardinals uniform for the foreseeable future.

"I don't get in on the (contract) negotiations," Kingsbury said. "My entire role on that was prayer and pleading, and it worked out really well for me. That's the negotiating side, I'm the football side."

The addendum was unexpected for several reasons, including that Kingsbury has never voiced displeasure with Murray's preparation for games. The two-time Pro Bowl quarterback has certainly had a few duds during his three-year pro career, but knowledge of the playbook never seemed to be the issue.

So why would the Cardinals feel the need to include that language in his contract? Great question.

Kingsbury said he doesn't track his players' iPad usage to see how much they're studying and that all players need different amounts. He added that the "independent study" mandate in Murray's contract shouldn't be a concern.

"He's got a quarter billion dollars," Kingsbury said laughing. "You can only be upset for so long, I guess. Negotiations — everybody has their things and wants different stuff. I'm just thrilled that this young man got what I feel he deserves."

Murray wasn't available to the media on Tuesday.

As players and support staff filed into a hotel in the western suburbs of Phoenix on Tuesday, no one seemed concern about Murray's grasp of the playbook.

Ertz — a three-time Pro Bowler who was traded to the Cardinals in the middle of last season after spending 8 1/2 season with the Philadelphia Eagles — said Murray was who he'd go to last season when he had football questions.

"He was the guy helping me along learning the playbook," Ertz said. "Ultimately, I've got to be on the same page as him."

Murray is entering his fourth season in the NFL and has had considerable success since being drafted No. 1 overall out of Oklahoma, where he won the Heisman Trophy in his final season. He was the league's Offensive Rookie of the Year in 2019 and a Pro Bowl selection the next two years.

He threw for 3,787 yards, 24 touchdowns and 10 interceptions last season while completing nearly 70% of his touchdowns. He also ran for five touchdowns and has a unique ability to extend plays with his feet, scampering around the pocket before making throws or pulling the ball down and running.

The only major blemish came last season, when the Cardinals started 10-2 and then collapsed down the stretch, losing four of five games before getting dumped by the Los Angeles Rams 34-11 in the NFC's Wild Card Round.

Murray said last week that the ugly playoff loss could benefit the Cardinals in the long run, since so many of the team's players are eager to atone for that performance.

Kingsbury said he expects even more improvement in Year 4.

"There's a handful of quarterbacks you can win a Super Bowl with in this league," Kingsbury said. "We feel like he's one of them."

NFL teams open camp with biggest question still unanswered

By ROB MAADDI
AP PRO FOOTBALL WRITER

Training camps opened across the NFL and the biggest offseason question remains unanswered.

The Cleveland Browns still don't know how many games they'll be without Deshaun Watson, who is still waiting for retired judge Sue L. Robinson to issue a ruling following his disciplinary hearing that concluded nearly four weeks ago.

The league and the NFL Players' Association requested a decision by the start of training camp, according to a person familiar with the process who spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity because the discussions are private. Robinson, who was jointly appointed by the league and the union, had no obligation to meet that deadline. Representatives are hopeful a decision comes this week.

Watson was accused of sexual misconduct by 24 women and has settled 20 of the civil lawsuits. Two separate Texas grand juries declined to indict Watson on criminal complaints stemming from the allegations.

The Browns, along with 27 other teams, welcomed their veterans on Tuesday as each of the 32 teams have now kicked off camp. Watson reported to his first camp with Cleveland last week along with veteran backup Jacoby Brissett, the team's presumed starter if there is a suspension. The Browns also signed Josh Rosen last week as more quarterback insurance.

Watson should be on the field for the team's first full-squad practice Wednesday. There was an amusing moment on Monday when the three-time Pro Bowl quarterback was seen walking in full uniform across the street in front of the Browns' training facility to take part in a photo shoot.

Other top questions around the NFL that still need to be addressed in training camp:

WHERE'S JIMMY G GOING? The San Francisco 49ers made it clear Trey Lance will be the starting quarterback and they're moving on from Jimmy Garoppolo, who led them to a Super Bowl appearance following the 2019 season and nearly another one last season. The Niners have to trade or release Garoppolo before Week 1 to avoid having his $24.2 million base salary become fully guaranteed. Garoppolo would've been moved already if it weren't for his offseason shoulder surgery.

"This is Trey's team. That's nothing against Jimmy," 49ers coach Mike Shanahan said. "We made that decision a year ago and we're not going to mess around with that anymore. ... Jimmy understands that fully. He's a big guy and it's nothing against him. It's a business decision."

BAKER OR SAM? The Carolina Panthers acquired Baker Mayfield from the Browns earlier this month and plan to let him compete with Sam Darnold for the starting quarterback job. Mayfield, the No. 1 overall pick in 2018, has been more successful than Darnold, who was the third pick by the Jets in the same draft.

Panthers coach Matt Rhule isn't going to rush a decision.

"Anytime you put timelines on things, you end up rushing to make bad decisions," Rhule said. "To me this is about being in the moment but not making rash judgements. Guys are going to have good days and bad days. When we know, we know."

WHEN DOES LAMAR GET PAID? The Baltimore Ravens still haven't locked Lamar Jackson into a long-term contract extension but the two sides have been talking. Jackson, the 2019 NFL MVP, saw his value increase after the Cardinals gave Kyler Murray a deal worth up to $230.5 million with about $105 million guaranteed at signing and $160 million guaranteed for injury. Jackson doesn't have an agent, which could impact negotiations. It wasn't a factor for his rookie deal because the collective bargaining agreement predetermines the money in each draft slot. This contract is far more lucrative.

ARE THEY HEALTHY? Saints quarterback Jameis Winston, Buccaneers wide receiver Chris Godwin, Ravens running back J.K. Dobbins are among more than 50 players returning from ACL injuries. Panthers running back Christian McCaffrey played only seven games last season because of hamstring and ankle injuries. Titans star running back Derrick Henry missed nine games with a foot injury before playing in the team's playoff loss to the Bengals. Cowboys receiver Michael Gallup, Ravens running back Gus Edwards, Titans receiver Robert Woods, Packers tight end Robert Tonyan are also coming back from ACL surgery. Saints star wideout Michael Thomas missed 2021 because of a severe ankle injury, and Vikings receiver Adam Thielen had ankle surgery in December.

Tinian hopes to host more sports events

By MARK RABAGO
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ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Tinian Mayor Edwin Aldan hopes the municipality hosting the beach volleyball consolation games of the Northern Marianas Pacific Mini Games 2022 will be the start of bigger things when it comes to sports tourism on the island.

"Tinian would love to host more of the Games or any other tournament from the region…The municipality of Tinian and Aguiguan is very happy to be a part of such an historic event and we will always be ready to showcase our island tourist/historical sites and our Tinian-style hospitality again when called for," he told *Saipan Tribune.*

This year's Mini Games was truly a CNMI-wide sports spectacle with Rota also hosting triathlon along with Saipan taking care of the majority of the nine sports featured in the calendar of the 11th staging of the Mini Games.

For the Tinian mayor, he would've wanted the beach volleyball players to have stayed a little longer.

"It would've been nice to have them stay overnight and we could have hosted them Tinian island-style. They had to leave the same day, as some of the players were leaving on Saturday morning back to their home countries."

ANGEL LI

CNMI National Beach Volleyball Team members Kathy Winkfield, right, and Charnessa Lizama.

Aldan said the consolation matches for beach volleyball were also completed without a hitch even as Tinian had to contend with a grass fire that eventually spread to a site where typhoon debris containing toxic chemicals and other e-waste materials were stored.

"The fire was pretty far away from the volleyball venue and it was pretty windy that day. They came and left the same day. No one got hurt and the fire and smoke was contained."

CNMI National Beach Volleyball Team member Kathy Winkfield said the brief sojourn to Tinian for the consolation matches was a treat.

"As for the consolation matches, we felt more relaxed since we had played against the teams during the pool play and were working on how to adjust to how we played them previously," she said.

All and all, the Northern Marianas College mathematics professor said the Mini Games experience has made her a better player.

"It was quite an unforgettable experience. I loved it and it has given me the drive to continue improving and playing the sport I love. I learned so much about myself as well as my partner and I hope it inspires others to try out and train for the next set of Games," she said.

ANGEL LI

The Kathy Winkfield, left, and Charnessa Lizama in action during the Northern Marianas Pacific Mini Games 2022 beach volleyball competition at the Crowne Plaza sand courts.

TRIBUNE SPORTS SCORES

MLB STANDINGS

AMERICAN LEAGUE

East Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
New York	66	32	.673	_
Toronto	54	43	.557	11½
Tampa Bay	52	45	.536	13½
Baltimore	49	48	.505	16½
Boston	49	49	.500	17

Central Division

Minnesota	52	45	.536	_
Cleveland	49	47	.510	2½
Chicago	49	48	.505	3
Kansas City	39	58	.402	13
Detroit	39	59	.398	13½

West Division

Houston	64	34	.653	_
Seattle	53	45	.541	11
Texas	43	53	.448	20
Los Angeles	41	56	.423	22½
Oakland	37	63	.370	28

AMERICAN LEAGUE

East Division

New York	60	37	.619	_
Atlanta	59	40	.596	2
Philadelphia	50	47	.515	10
Miami	46	51	.474	14
Washington	34	65	.343	27

Central Division

Milwaukee	54	44	.551	_
St. Louis	51	47	.520	3
Chicago	40	57	.412	13½
Pittsburgh	40	58	.408	14
Cincinnati	37	59	.385	16

West Division

Los Angeles	64	32	.667	_
San Diego	55	44	.556	10½
San Francisco	48	49	.495	16½
Arizona	44	53	.454	20½
Colorado	44	54	.449	21

BY THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

TOVES

From Page 20

Please come back and share what you will learn to our young players," Tan said.

Meanwhile, Toves said he will use the opportunity to play off-island to continue improving his game and represent the NMI well. He commits to continue playing for the NMI national team and inspire young players to stay with the NMIFA program.

Toves' school has two teams—the FC RIASA/Ecleshill United FC—which competes in the Northern Counties East Football League. NECL is a semi-professional English football league with two divisions (Premier Division and Division One), which stand at the ninth and 10th levels of the football pyramid respectively. The league has over 40 club members.

Navarro College, on the other hand, is part of the National Junior College Athletic Association, which sanctions community, state, and junior college athletics throughout the U.S. The Bulldogs are the eight-time Region XIV champions, have made it to the NJCAA National Tournament nine times, including a runner-up finish in 2013, and was once ranked No. 1 (2013) in the entire competition. This is the same school that recruited Wally's teammate on the NMI National Women's Team, Guinevere Borja, who is now with Oklahoma Panhandle State University in the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics.

NMI Women's National Team head coach Luem Khen Koo, who joined Tan and other NMIFA officials in last weekend's ceremony, believes the growing numbers of NMI players getting opportunities to compete in the collegiate ranks, will encourage more players—especially female ones—to try the sport. Wally is the seventh NMI female player to move up to collegiate ranks since 2016. In the men's side, more than 10 NMI players have played in the collegiate league.

NMI Men's National Team head coach and NMIFA technical director Michiteru Mita reminded Toves and Wally to be role models on and off the pitch and capitalize on every opportunity to play against high-level teams and learn from them.

NICKOLE

From Page 20

To prepare for one of the biggest jiu-jitsu competitions of the year, Nickole trained almost seven days a week and on each day for about 2 hours or more.

"Her jiu-jitsu gym allowed her to come in on off-days to train extra hours to sharpen her game. Before this tournament, Nickole fought back-to-back competitions the past two Saturdays for Newbreed in Raleigh and Charleston just to keep the edge on her competition speed. She loves to compete for the pleasure of winning to make us proud and traveling to new places," said Nicko.

Nickole's parents credited Malachy Friedman, her BJJ instructor, for all her success in the sport and for even going literally the extra mile to support their daughter.

"I am very happy with the outcome of her performance and I give a lot of credit also to her instructor Malachy Friedman for showing up to Florida just in time to coach her. He taught a seminar in Las Vegas for kids BJJ and had to fly all the way across the country hours prior for the sole purpose of coaching Nickole. He's not just a dedicated coach but an amazing human being and we trust his program. Everything was in the right place at the right time and I know it was what God had intended it to be," said Nicko, who originally is from San Antonio, Saipan.

To celebrate Nickole's gold medal win in the 2022 Pan Kids Jiu-Jitsu Championships, the Salem family drove to Orlando, Florida where they will be staying one whole week and enjoy Dis-

KWON

From Page 20

also were in the winners' circle after the former drubbed Guam's Aki Matsuno, 6-4, 6-2, and the latter beat Guam's Hilary Toves, 6-1, 6-1.

In the girls 14 and under, Irin Chung had an easy 6-0, 6-1 win over Palau's Clara Ueki.

Anna Kwon also beat Guam's Donna Entera, 6-2, 6-2.

Lina Tsukagoshi lost to Guam's Leah San Agustin, 4-6, 6-7, in the girls 12 and under age group.

In the boys 12 and under doubles, Jeong Woo "Ryan" Choi and Jihun Park bowed to Guam's Jeren Devera and Camelo Chen, 3-6, 6-2, 2-10.

Ian Chae also lost to Guam's Camelo Chen, 6-1, 6-1, in the boys 12 and under singles. Yutaka Kadokura beat Guam's Jeren Devera, 6-2, 4-2, in the same division.

After an absence of two years due to the COVID-19 pandemic, a total of 19 junior netters from the Northern Marianas are seeing action in the 2022 North Pacific Regional Championships.

They are duking it out against 16 players from Guam, six players from the Federated States of Micronesia, and five players from Palau.

The CNMI team is coached by Northern Mariana Islands Tennis Association president Jeff Race.

Springer hits slam, Jays win 7th in row, top depleted Cards

PAGE 17

Saipan Tribune
Sports

Tinian hopes to host more sports events

PAGE 19

Toves, Wally to continue soccer journey

ROSELYN B. MONROYO
In this combo photo, Merrick Toves is joined by NMIFA technical director Michiteru Mita, while Britany Wally (center, right photo) is with NMIFA executive director Russelle Zapanta and coach Angie Ito during a brief ceremony last Friday in Koblervillle announcing the two NMI National Team pool players' move to continue their soccer journey off-island.

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

NMI National Team pool players Merrick Toves and Britany Wally will continue their soccer journey off-island as they joined their respective school's program.

Toves, who plays goalie for the national team, will be with the Richmond International Academic and Soccer Academy—an association football academy based in Leeds, England. Wally, on the other hand, is heading to Texas to suit up for Navarro College.

"I am excited for this opportunity. I've been waiting for this since I graduated from high school a couple of years ago. Finally, it's happening and I would like to thank everyone who helped me get the chance to play college soccer. Thank you to NMIFA, my coaches, and teammates," said Wally.

Northern Mariana Islands Football Association president Jerry Tan led a brief ceremony for Wally and Toves last Friday at the NMIFA office in Koblerville and is pleased with how NMI players are given opportunities to pursue higher education through football.

"We lost count already on how many NMI players have made it to the collegiate ranks and that's very good news for us—a boost to our program. We are all proud of you and we wish you good luck as you continue to play football.

See TOVES on Page 19

Nickole Salem strikes gold anew

By MARK RABAGO
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ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Nickole Salem added another notch to her belt after winning the gold medal in the 6-7 year old division of the 2022 Pan Kids Jiu-Jitsu Championships.

Salem beat two other BJJ practitioners to crack into the championship round, where she also emerged victorious to top her age group of the International Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu Federation-organized competition.

Salem's father, Nicko, said her daughter was emotional after her win in the 2022 Pan Kids Jiu-Jitsu Championships.

"After Nickole won the championship round she ran up to me and gave me a big hug. She had not shared what she felt but I knew what was going on in her mind. Nickole was crying at the end of the championship round and I felt like it was many emotions compiled into one," he said.

The younger Salem's gold medal was made sweeter after she almost lost via submission during her preliminary matches.

"She was a little sore from almost being submitted twice via armbar and fighting two matches prior to the championship round. At the end she fought hard to secure the win by points and I could tell it was an overwhelming feeling for her. On top of that I knew that she was extremely happy to win and take home gold, because she loves making her friends and the family proud," said Nicko.

Nickole's mother, Maria Victoria, originally from Garapan, Saipan, was also overwhelmed with a lot of emotions, because "we both knew that she deserves it," he said.

See NICKOLE on Page 19

CONTIBUTED PHOTO
Nickole Salem, center, is all smiles after winning the gold medal in the 6-7 year old division of the 2022 Pan Kids Jiu-Jitsu Championships.

Kwon wins third straight game in NPRC

Kwon

By MARK RABAGO
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ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Min Soo "David" Kwon continued his comeback tour by winning his third straight game yesterday in the 2022 North Pacific Regional Championships at the Guam National Tennis Center in Dededo.

After losing to Jonothan Jackson in Day 2, Mt. Carmel School student beat Guam's Ton Perez, 6-2, 5-7, 6-4, to advance in the boys 16 and under division.

"The Guam tournament is fun and tiring. I like playing off-island because I get to play with different players. Each player has a different play style and it's hard to figure out their weaknesses but it always turns into a fun game where I make new friends. I always loved coming to Guam to play tennis and I am so glad I got to come again," said Kwon.

The CNMI's Simon Tang, meanwhile, lost to Jackson, 0-6, 1-6.

In the girls 16 and under, Serin Chung remained perfect following a 6-3, 6-2 win over Guam's Amelie Terlaje.

Savita Sikkel also was victorious after repulsing Guam's Aubrey Cruz, 7-5, 1-6, 10-1.

La Hunn Lam also continued his domination of the boys 14 and under division after he beat compatriot Nason Wessel, 6-4, 6-1.

Seung Woo "Henry" Choi also was triumphant after defeating the Federated States of Micronesia's Daniel Dontrick, 6-0, 6-0.

Si Woo Lee and June Yu

See KWON on Page 19